Christ Working in Us

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The long Epistle to the Hebrews stands unique in the New Testament as the most detailed exposition of the present ministry of Christ as our great High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, and the practical outworking of that truth for the believer in this present evil age.
The central message, repeated in countless forms throughout the book, is this:
We are not merely saved to escape judgment, but saved to serve the living God.
Our eternal life is secure by grace through faith alone, but the purpose of that life is to be lived out now, in the body, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.
Because of the one offering of Christ—His risen, endless life presented to the Father—we have been perfected forever, our consciences cleansed, and we are invited to draw near with boldness, to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, and to provoke one another to love and good works while we see the Day approaching.
The old shadows have passed away.
The new and living way has been consecrated for us through His flesh.
We have a great High Priest over the house of God.
Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
May the Lord grant us grace to walk worthy of this heavenly calling, serving Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 5:1–14
1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:
2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.
3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.
4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.
5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.
6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.
7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;
8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;
9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.
11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.
12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.
13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.
14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

This is a complete chapter and serves as an introduction to the subject we wish to consider. The Epistle to the Hebrews actually deals with a twofold theme. In the first place, the epistle speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ as the High Priest. That is the principal theme. Secondly, and immediately flowing from it and inseparably connected with it, is the thought that this High Priest would bring at least one sacrifice. And that is precisely what He has done: one sacrifice for Himself and for the sins of the people. This theme is introduced for the first time here in Hebrews 5. It is the first occasion in the epistle where mention is made of offering for sins and of an offering brought by the Lord Jesus Christ. As far as I am aware, it is even the first time the concept of “offering” appears in Hebrews. Yet what is noteworthy is that this chapter itself has an introduction, for no fewer than four full chapters precede it. These four chapters form a unity in themselves and lead to a practical conclusion at the end of chapter 4. That section stands on its own; it makes no mention of sacrifices, yet it speaks at length about the Lord Jesus Christ being appointed High Priest. The conclusion then follows in.

Hebrews 4:14–16

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.
15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.
16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

This is the practical conclusion and consequence of what has been set forth in the preceding four chapters, where the Lord Jesus is spoken of exclusively as the One appointed High Priest. From chapter 5 onwards the subject begins afresh, as it were. Once again Christ is discussed at length as High Priest, but now the thought is added that this High Priest has indeed, as might be expected of a high priest, brought an offering after the pattern of the Old Testament high priests of the order of Aaron. This involves a comparison between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, and thus also between the priesthood of the Old Covenant after the order of Aaron and the New Covenant, of which Christ is the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. It is a comparison between Aaron and Christ, but

then the idea of the sacrifice He brought is also brought into the discussion, leading to a far-reaching conclusion.

- The Content of the Epistle

The central thought of the Epistle to the Hebrews is, in fact, this: the Lord Jesus Christ, by His resurrection and on the ground of His resurrection, has been appointed High Priest of the New Covenant, called after the order of Melchisedec. Whereupon we who believe are called to place our lives under the government of this High Priest of the New Covenant, just as those who belonged to the Old Covenant and lived under it were called to place their lives under the government of the high priest of the Old Covenant. The Epistle to the Hebrews does not speak about how we pass from the Old Covenant to the New, nor about how we are saved, born again, or delivered from our sinful nature and from the old man with the guilt of sin we bear by nature. The epistle merely states that believers now live under the New Covenant. That is simply the case, and how this came about is scarcely explained, and certainly not with any practical call to come to faith. The epistle sets forth that we live under the New Covenant, so that we may be expected to place our lives now under the direction, under the control, under the rule of this High Priest and King of the New Covenant. It is therefore a call to serve Him.If we fail to grasp this, we shall always find the Epistle to the Hebrews difficult. It is commonly regarded as the most difficult epistle in the whole New Testament, and that is probably why. People do not understand that it is not about salvation as such, nor about our conversion or new birth—although these things are occasionally touched upon—but rather about the fact that we who are saved should now serve God, or rather Christ, under the New Covenant. It speaks of the consequences of our position as children of God and as those living under the New Covenant. It is about practical service.

- The Epistle to the Hebrews falls into two main parts.

The first part, up to and including chapter 4, speaks of Christ as the High Priest to whom we should draw near. In the second part, from chapter 5 through to chapter 10, the same subject is set forth once more, but now the concept of the sacrifice of this High Priest is included. Thereafter, from about chapter 11 to the end of the epistle, we find the practical conclusions drawn from the preceding sections.
In the first part of the epistle, Christ is presented as having indeed become High Priest of the New Covenant (whatever that may mean), and it concludes with the statement in chapter 4:14–16, where the thought is that we should draw near with boldness to the throne of grace. If we leave out the subordinate clauses, it reads: “Seeing then that we have a great high priest… let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” This is not addressed to unbelieving people who ought thereby to come to faith, but to believing, regenerated people in relation to their practical life. They may find mercy and grace at that throne, and help in time of need, simply for their everyday life and indeed for their practical service to God. The

worship of God under the New Covenant—that is what it is about. It does not say, “Let us take hold of this profession,” but “let us hold fast our profession.” That means we have already come to faith, and the intention is that we should abide therein, hold it fast, and live out of that faith. We should place our lives in dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ who sits upon the throne.

The second part of the epistle is essentially about the same thing, but now it is not only about the High Priest but also about the sacrifice He brought. Of Him it is said that as High Priest He brought a sacrifice, namely Himself. And again, that He brought one sacrifice, once for all, namely Himself, namely His body. From the context it is clear—and you must for the moment accept this from me—that He offered Himself, namely His body. This means that He offered Himself, namely His body, to God and placed it in the service of God. For Christ, the Risen One, is the One who serves God in this position. He has not only offered Himself but also His body. From the context and the conclusions, it becomes plain what is meant by this. He has at the same time offered His body—His Church—presented it and placed it in the service of God, so that we as believers have a share in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. His service consists in His high-priestly office, and that means that we, as His body, have a share with Him in His priesthood. This is obviously not a theoretical matter. It concerns practical things, practical priestly service. And to this the readers of this epistle are called. It is stated that this is simply how things are. We have a share in Christ. Ephesians would say that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. One of those blessings is that He has been appointed Priest. That automatically implies, according to the terms of Hebrews, that we too have been appointed priests of the New Covenant. In this epistle we are called to take this priestly position seriously, that is, to practise the office we have received.

- Priest by Birth

The thought is that under the Old Covenant one was a priest, not by virtue of a special calling, appointment, election or study, but simply because one was born so, according to the power of life. To be sure, according to the power of corruptible life. One was descended from Aaron, and on that ground one was a priest and possibly even high priest. The point is that we, as the firstfruits of the New Covenant, as the first believers since the resurrection of Christ, have thereby become priests according to the power of incorruptible life, namely according to the power of our new birth. We are pointed to this and called to take that position seriously indeed. We are called to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called (Ephesians 4:1).

It therefore concerns very practical matters, which are nevertheless set forth by a theoretical route. The disadvantage of this is, of course, that one can lose the thread of the argument along the way and so fail to follow the reasoning, partly because it is often assumed that the argument must lead somewhere else. That is why it is not followed. People seem already to know where the argument will end up. The general idea is that the Lord Jesus is the cause of eternal salvation, for everyone who believes

in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. That is indeed found in the epistle, but it is not the drift of the epistle. People think they already know what ought to be there, and therefore in practice they do not read what the epistle actually teaches. They are not seeking it. They project their own thoughts into it. That is really the great problem.
The Epistle to the Hebrews is concerned with the two things that are discussed from chapter 5 onwards and continue through chapters 9 and 10. Those are the two chapters in which the sacrifice of Christ is spoken of clearly at any rate. Thereafter comes again the practical conclusion, just as in chapter 4:14, in chapter 10:19 and following. If you place these two sections side by side, you see that they correspond with one another.

Hebrews 10:19–23
19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
21 And having an high priest over the house of God;
22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)In chapter 4 it says: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace”; chapter 10 obviously speaks of the same thing. Coming boldly to Christ. Let us go to Him, to present ourselves, our lives, and even in our case our bodies, as an offering. That is really the thought, and so it stands in Hebrews 12:2. The intention is that we should place our lives in the service of the One who sits upon the throne. In practice this means that we should live by faith. That we should place our trust, even in practical life, wholly upon the One who sits upon the throne of grace. Reward in the future we shall also receive reward for this, but if in the practice of our life we do not place ourselves in dependence upon Christ—for that is what it comes down to—then we receive no reward, no matter what we may have done. Even though we may have done many things in His name. Then the Lord says, “I never knew you,” to take a Scripture out of context for a moment. Hebrews 10 says in verse 35 that we must not cast away our confidence. That is, of course, the confidence to draw near to the throne of grace. It is a confidence that has “great recompence of reward.” That is to say: insofar as we place our lives in His service; insofar as we place our lives in dependence upon Him, we shall in the future also receive reward for it. For if we place our lives in dependence upon Him, He can do His work—the work for which He is responsible—in us and through us. For the work of all the priests of the Old Covenant stood under the responsibility of the high priest. And the work done by the priests of the New Covenant stands under the responsibility and therefore also under the direction of the High Priest of that New Covenant, namely Christ. So there is no recompence of reward for the works that we have done in the body. Recompence of reward is for as much as Christ Himself has been able to do His work in us and through us. That can only happen if we place

our lives in dependence upon Him who sits upon the throne. In short: that in practice we live by faith. That is also what follows in verses 37 and 38.

Hebrews 10:37–38
37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.
38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.
The Lord will come. We are, after all, waiting for His return. But in the meantime, verse 38 applies: “Now the just shall live by faith.” That is the intention. It does not say that the unjust shall receive life from faith, or “The unjust shall be justified by faith.” That is certainly a biblical truth, but that truth is not stated here.
There you have it again—something of the kind. If you think you must find in the epistle that the sinner is saved by faith, and you read this verse superficially, you get the impression that it says that too. But it does not. It says that the just—the believer, therefore, someone who is born again—shall live by faith. In practice, day by day. Not coming to life, but simply living, that is, walking in the practical sense of the word.
That the just shall live by faith has everything to do with the boldness of verse 35, for it is still the same subject. And this is then stated again in verse 39.

Hebrews 10:39
39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.
We are not those who draw back from the priestly service of the New Covenant. We are not those who forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as in verse 25. It is all the same thing. We are not those who draw back unto perdition. For if in the practice of our life we draw back from this High Priest—whom we should serve and whose work should be done through us—then it means that nothing whatever remains of our practical walk here on earth. This is also stated in 1 Corinthians 3, where, incidentally, milk and strong meat are mentioned as well. There Paul says that the works of the believer will be cast into the fire, and it will then become clear which works were according to the flesh, according to man, and which were done by God Himself, or rather by Christ Himself, or by His Spirit, through us and in us. For gold, silver, and precious stones endure the fire, but wood, hay, and stubble will indeed be burned up by the fire.In Hebrews 10:39, the word “perdition” is used, to be sure, but not in the same sense as in
John 3:16
16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
In John 3:16 it concerns our existence, our being as such—whether we have life or not. But in Hebrews 10:39 the same concept is applied, not to our being, but to our work: the work of the believer under the New Covenant. In John 3:16, however, it is not about having or receiving eternal life. It is about living (with emphasis on the verb) that eternal life.

It concerns the outworking of it, the practical service. These are two different things.
In 1 Corinthians 3, believers are spoken of who have not built with gold, silver, or precious stones, but with their own works—namely, wood, hay, and stubble. They thought they had to offer something themselves, to do their own works. And it says that this will be burned up. He himself, however, shall be saved, yet so as by fire. The believer himself is saved, but of his practical life on earth—the years he spent as a believer here in the flesh—nothing remains. It may have been a practical life, but that life was not in the service of the High Priest and of the New Covenant. That life was not led from the Throne of Grace. Incidentally, it is stated very much in black and white here.
In practice, our life has no value anyway, because everything we do is connected with the old man, and, frankly, I do not regret that it disappears. But another part of our life will indeed be preserved, because that part consists of the works of God that were done through our body—the works He was able to do through us. The result of that remains preserved, and not only that: we even receive reward for it. It is this practical service that Hebrews 10:39 is about.

- Preservation of Spirit and Soul

Hebrews 10:39a

39a But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving...To the saving of what? There, of course, lies the key. It is, namely, “to the saving of the soul.” The point is that our new birth as such has nothing to do with the they do not know the distinction. The Bible, however, does. The spirit is our being, our life as such; the soul is the practical outworking of that towards the outside. The soul denotes everything in man that is visible, in whatever way. That is how it is throughout the whole Bible. The soul is therefore not invisible, but can be seen. It also includes the works of man. That is a separate subject, which I cannot discuss just like that. But let me then refer to Genesis 1: man was formed from the dust of the ground, and into him was breathed the breath, or spirit, of life, and so man became a living—that is, a practically living, walking, working, doing, active—soul. Soul is therefore the active, working man. Every time you encounter the word “soul” in the Bible—assuming it is a correct translation—it has that meaning.
And here it is not about the saving of the spirit, but the saving of the soul. Our new birth concerns the saving of the spirit. When we are born again, we are born of God, born of the Spirit, and receive new life, a new nature. That new life is called spirit. For that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3).
In 1 Corinthians 5, someone is spoken of whose practical life came to nothing. That man had to be delivered unto Satan, that his spirit might be saved. The thought is that only his spirit would be saved. To put it popularly: he would get to heaven, but nothing would remain of his practical life. If we are born again and have received new life, then we have received eternal life. That is spirit. Our spirit is saved, but the intention thereafter is that our soul—our practical walk here on earth—

should also be saved, preserved. In short, that something should also remain of our practical life, of our soul, after the rapture of the Church, after our appearance before the judgment seat of Christ. The intention is that our practical lives here should bear fruit for eternity. That is what it is about. After our spirit is saved, the intention is that our soul should also be saved.
“The saving of the soul” is a term used in several places in the Bible. Not only by Paul, but also by Peter and James. It is a term that is not well known. People do not know its meaning, because they think it concerns new birth, but that is not the case. It concerns practical service, the practical walk of the believer. For the purpose of our new birth is that now we are born again and have received new life, we should also actually live that life. When a child is born, it has received life. The intention is that it should then also actively live. Dedicate or spend that life on something. That is what this Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of in particular. But it is a theme we encounter in every New Testament epistle.
We are therefore not of those who draw back unto perdition, but of those who believe. That is to say, of those who live by faith, as verse 38 says. We are of those who believe to the saving of the soul. So that the soul may be saved. Peter says that the intention is that we should live by faith, thereby obtaining the end of our faith, namely the salvation of souls. It concerns practical service. We who are born again to a living hope (1 Peter 1) are expected to live by faith, day by day, thereby obtaining—that is, being busy obtaining—the end, namely the goal of our faith, namely the salvation of souls. A few verses later he says what that means. The intention is that you should be holy in all your manner of life. In this context, that is another word for soul.

- How to Live by Faith

Hebrews 11 gives us examples of what such a life by faith looks like. The point is that a life by faith is absolutely different for every believer. The common factor is that it is a life in dependence on the Lord and devoted to His service. To what extent the Lord makes use of that service and in what way is different for each of us. That is why you never read anything detailed about it in the Bible. It simply is not there. You cannot find God’s will for your personal life in the Bible. You can find God’s will in general for all believers in this dispensation, but not for each of us in particular. That is not the intention either, for that is the work of Christ in us, or rather of the Holy Spirit, who should lead us where He wants us to be. That is therefore a very personal matter. That is why it is not said what it looks like. That is why it is said how it can look. That is why various examples are given: the examples of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and then even Rahab the harlot, for the Lord can use her too. Then Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, and so on. In short, all sorts of different examples concerning the same faith of different people in Old Testament times.
The last example is actually the most important. That is reserved for chapter 12. There it says that we too should follow the example of these Old Testament believers and thus serve the High Priest, or rather God. We

should look to the example of these Old Testament believers, but especially to the Author and Finisher of our faith. To our Forerunner, namely. The One who has gone before us. In this epistle He is called the High Priest. The High Priest is first and foremost the Leader, the Forerunner of the priests. We should therefore look to this High Priest and live as He did. With the fullest confidence in the Word of God, thereby enduring all contradiction, all persecution, all chastening, and so on. Then in chapter 13 it speaks particularly about the fact that we too have an altar and therefore a practical priestly service. For the word “altar” is used there to denote the whole priestly service. This is summarised in verse 15 of chapter 13.

Hebrews 13:15
15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.
Peter says in the same context that we are “a royal priesthood, to proclaim the virtues of Christ.” Here it is the same: “the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.” That we offer up, for speaking the Word of God and bringing the Gospel is first and foremost a sacrifice to God. We give that to God, and that is indeed what He expects of us. That is the highest priestly service.
From one verse to the next, the apostle goes from the highest priestly service to the lowest, the simplest as well, namely that of verse 16.

Hebrews 13:16
16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
Between them lies a whole range of a complete life that stands in the service of the Lord. There are therefore many different ways to serve the Lord. In practice, it means that we should not merely speak His Word and put something in the collection bag, but that we should place our whole life in His hand. That includes our lips, and it also includes our purse. That is the summary of this epistle.

- The Firstfruits of a New Creation

The beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells how Christ first became High Priest and then, from chapter 5 onwards, how He also brought a sacrifice. In that order. For it is Christ, as the High Priest, of whom it is taught that He brought a sacrifice, and therefore He had first to be High Priest. When someone is appointed high priest, his whole life is thereby placed in God’s service, and he is offered with his whole being. Not for a few hours a day, for he is not that by profession, but he is that by virtue of his birth and therefore according to his being.

- God Speaks to Us through the Son

But before that happened, a number of other things are also set forth. In Hebrews 1:1 it says that God in these last days has spoken to us by the Son. There you already have the whole story together, for the rest of the epistle says that He has become High Priest, and the epistle also says—

what the whole Bible teaches—that the chief function of the priest is to speak the Word of God. That the lips of the priest preserve the commandments, or rather the words of God. Here it says that He is the Son and that God speaks through Him. In what manner is rather complicated, but nevertheless it says that it is so. “These last days” means that it is not those other last days, but the days from the resurrection of Christ until His return, for after that follow the other last days, namely the days in which His Kingdom on earth has meanwhile taken shape. So right at the beginning it is already said what this epistle speaks of in particular, and therefore also about which time: these last days, namely from the resurrection of Christ until His return.
This Son (verse 2) He has appointed heir of all things. It actually says that He has appointed Him heir of the universe. That cannot be otherwise, for He sits on the highest throne there is. He is the brightness of God’s glory (verse 3) and the express image of His person, and upholds all things by the word of His power. That is three times the same thing. Three times it says that He is the form of God, the outward appearance of God. Of the invisible and unknowable God. For when this invisible and unknowable God manifests Himself in a form, then the Son appears there, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. While in the Old Testament of that same Lord—incidentally still without the name Jesus—it is said that there is no God besides Him. When we speak of the Son, or of the Lord Jesus Christ, we therefore speak of the One who is the form of God. He is the manifesting God, so that the abstract God takes concrete form in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Purification for Our Sins

It then states that after He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This also means that He has entered into rest and finished His work. Although His suffering and death are referred to here, it is only in a subordinate clause. The whole sentence declares: He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is added that this took place after He had purged our sins. That is a subordinate clause, for it is not the main subject of this epistle.
Christ sat down on the right hand of God as the High Priest, and He became so only after He had purged our sins. The thought is that the purification for our sins—the sins of the sinner—is a work that belongs not to the New Covenant but rather to the Old Covenant. By that purification the debt was settled. This took place under the law and even by means of the law. For that is what the law demanded: namely, the death of the responsible party, the death of the sinner. In this case, the death of the One who had made Himself responsible for those sins and was able to do so. The suffering and death of the Lord Jesus are therefore part of the Old Covenant, but they also thereby bring the Old Covenant to an end and set the balance at zero, so that thereafter there is opportunity to begin the New Covenant.
I picture the old creation, and with it the Old Covenant, as an insolvent estate or business. There were outstanding debts. The Lord Jesus came and set the account to zero. He paid the debts, thereby creating the possibility to start afresh. To begin with a new creation. On the one hand

as a continuation of the old, but without taking over the debts of the old creation. The coming of the Lord Jesus was under the law, bearing the sins of the world. His suffering and death, even to the point of death, was a matter of the law and of the old creation. That has nothing to do with the New Covenant. It was necessary in order to be able thereafter to establish the New Covenant. It was necessary to settle the debt of the old creation, so that a new creation could be put in its place.

- Kings and Priests

The New Covenant begins with the appearing of the Mediator, the High Priest of the New Covenant, and that is at His resurrection from the dead. And at His resurrection He was not only raised from the dead but also supremely exalted and seated at the right hand of God. As the Representative of God—but He was always that, of course. At any rate, He was placed on the throne, and there He is the cause, the Firstborn of a new creation, and thus the King of that new creation and therefore also the High Priest of that new creation. What God is doing from that time onward is bringing that new creation to development.
For that purpose He is now gathering to Himself a people out of this old creation. To that people He gives new life, namely the life of the new creation. The intention is that this people should indeed share in the character of Christ. It thus becomes a people of firstfruits and a people of kings and priests. A people of men who in the future will be involved in the government both of the Kingdom of that New Covenant and of the new creation itself. That is quite different from hoping one day to die saved or hoping one day to get to heaven. No one knows what one is supposed to do there then. That is scraping through by the skin of one’s teeth. The spirit saved, hopefully, but people have no conception of a saved soul and a saved body. The point is that we, as believers, are being gathered out of the world to be appointed as sons, just like Christ. If we prove faithful here below, we are appointed as sons, joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8), and we receive responsibilities in the Kingdom and receive crowns or cities there. In short, we are involved in the government of that Kingdom and thereby even of the new creation. That is what God is doing now. Not the conversion of the world. Not the manifestation of His Kingdom on earth. No—the gathering of a body of officials. A people of the superfluous, of the remnant; a people of men who in this world in reality no longer have any function, who no longer fit in there, who have moreover escaped from it, but who are also superfluous to that world.
That is the Church. That is us, already withdrawn from this world and already sharing in spiritual things, in the things of the new creation. We are expected to live out of that now and thereby to be trained as sons, as joint-heirs, so that in the future we may reign with Christ as kings and priests. We shall share with Him in the responsibility over the new creation.

- To this we are called.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are therefore called to give ourselves over to this. To forget the old man and the old world, but to live out of this

calling. To walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called (Ephesians 4). And if we do not know with what calling we are called, how could we then walk worthy of that calling? And if we think that God in our days wants to convert the world and we cooperate in that, we may be engaged in a noble and well-intentioned work, but in any case not in the work in which God wants us to be involved in our days. For that is not His work. That is a work which will be done in the future. In which, incidentally, we shall be involved in a special way. But now that is not the issue. Now God is gathering to Himself a people of individuals who in this life ought to be trained one by one, so that only later may we desire our real task. That training naturally begins with placing our lives in His hand and acknowledging that He has called us and that we are conscious of who we have become, knowing that we have been born again as priests according to the power of an endless life and as firstfruits of a new creation of the New Covenant. And nobility obliges. We therefore place the lives He has given us in His hand, so that He may do with them what He wills. That is the biblical message. Being born again is not an end in itself; on the contrary. It is the basis from which that new creation is to be built.

- The Old Man

The problem with the old man is that he does not do what he wants to do, and does what he does not want to do. With his mind, with his will, with his spirit, with his feelings, and with his understanding he submits to God’s law, but the flesh does not, and cannot. So that with all our good intentions we cannot by nature serve the Lord with our body. That is the working of sin. That is therefore the great problem we are faced with. The Epistle to the Hebrews sets forth in the first two chapters that this problem has been solved, so that we should no longer worry about it. Of course we are still partly troubled by its consequences, but that is not the point, for these things of the old man should not hinder us from placing our lives in His hand. Normally one would say: “What is the Lord to do with our sinful lives? You cannot place that in His hand, can you?” But God says that He has solved that problem. So you can forget it, and that is much the same as forgive. Not because of the spelling, but because of the meaning of the words. To forgive means to let go, to leave alone, not to rake up. And to forget means the same. God has therefore arranged it so that He says we are made perfect in Christ. And the intention is that now we are made perfect, we should indeed place our lives in His hand with all boldness.
Even under the Old Covenant what was defective might not be offered. What was offered had to be perfect in itself. We are not perfect in ourselves and therefore cannot place our lives in His hand, but He has first made us perfect in Christ and thus ensured that we are perfect according to the spirit. The intention is that now we are perfect, we should place our lives in His hand with all boldness. And it is assumed that we do this gladly and that this is also our aim. The intention is also that we have come to faith for this very purpose: that we should serve our God, our Creator. That can now take place, for all the problems that existed have been removed, and therefore we can now present our lives as a living, holy, acceptable

sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1). The Lord Jesus did the same, but that is dealt with in chapter 7 and especially in chapters 9 and 10 of Hebrews. After He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.
Hebrews 1, from verse 4 through to chapter 2, goes further into this. By means of Old Testament Scripture passages, the writer shows how biblical it is that the Messiah should not merely have a place on the throne of David and thus below the angels, but that the Messiah should have a place on the throne of God, above the angels. After that, the theme of verse 3 of chapter 1 is taken up again.
In Hebrews 2:1 it says that we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard—not from Paul or from us, but from Christ Himself. In these last days God has spoken to us by this Son. Formerly by the prophets to the fathers, but now by the Son. Therefore we must hold more firmly than the fathers in the past to the things we have heard. For in the past it was only the prophets, but in our days it is Christ Himself who speaks to us through His Word. He also speaks to us in our hearts, and the thought is that we should obey that voice.3. The Son of Man
He has not put the world to come in subjection to angels (Hebrews 2:5), but to the Son of man (verse 6). This is quoted from Psalm 8. The Son of man, namely, who according to verse 7 was made for a little while—that is, a short time—lower than the angels, but who afterwards, when that short time was over, was crowned by God Himself with glory and honour and seated on the highest throne in heaven.

Hebrews 2:5–9
5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.
6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?
7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:
8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.
9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.
And then people think it is about them. It is not about them here, but about Him. Who is this man? is the question. The average believer thinks it is about himself. The unbeliever is not expected to know the Bible, so he gives no answer to that question anyway. We are set over the works of God’s hands, so we must be good to the environment. That is the present-day variant. You hear that preached from the pulpit every Sunday. But that Son of man is Christ.
“O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”—the same Psalm adds. That man is the LORD. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God.

We do not yet see that “all things are put under Him,” so you know exactly what “these last days” are. They are the days in which Christ is already supremely exalted, but also the days in which the world does not yet see it. That can only be our dispensation, for in the next one He is manifested and every eye shall see Him. It therefore concerns church truth. We do not yet see that all things are subjected to Him. That is correct, for the Lord Jesus is not yet making use of that power. Before He manifests His power, He first gathers to Himself His own people, a body His Church - who will be involved in the manifestation of that Kingdom on earth.
Incidentally, many places will fall vacant in heaven in the future, for Satan and his angels will be cast out of heaven. They are the ones who now in practice exercise power over the world. The power of the air, of which Satan is the prince. The spiritual wickedness in high places, which in fact hold the power in the world. But we are being withdrawn from that power. At least that is the intention, for we must also want it. In the future we shall definitively enter our eternal position, and at the same occasion this whole power of the air will be cast down from the air to the earth. It will be clear that we then take their place, and the intention is that we shall then know what must be done. Not for nothing do we wrestle against spiritual wickedness in high places. We are the successors. They out, and we in.
We do not yet see that all things are subjected to Him, but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, who for a short time was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death (the suffering, namely, that led to death), so that by the grace of God He might taste death for every man.
Here reference is made to what preceded. Here it speaks of the Lord Jesus before He was crowned with glory and honour. It speaks of the days of His humiliation. The days before He became Priest and therefore also the days before He brought an offering. In short, it concerns the fact that He should suffer until death followed, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for every man. It does not say that He offered Himself in death. Although the whole Epistle to the Hebrews is about priesthood, offering, worship, and so on, this is not mentioned here. He did not become man in order to offer Himself. Nothing is proved by that, for you cannot prove something that is not there. Yet it is remarkable that it is not stated in that way.
Afterwards, in Hebrews 2, verse 14, the same subject is spoken of again.

Hebrews 2:14
14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
Hebrews 2:15
15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
“Forasmuch then as the children (actually sons) are partakers of flesh and blood…” The thought in the intervening verses is that Christ would be the Firstborn in the midst of many brethren. The First of a great Church. In short, He would bring many sons to glory. And God, who desired to bring

many sons to glory, considered it necessary not that those many sons should suffer, but that it was necessary only for their Captain to suffer and thereby be perfected.
This is for those who think that we too can be perfected only through suffering, because that was also the case with the Lord Jesus. No, for here precisely the opposite is stated. It was necessary only that their Captain should be perfected through suffering. Only the First. And that suffering was the suffering of death, as the context makes clear. Put another way, Hebrews 2:14a states: “Forasmuch then as the sons who were to be brought to glory are also partakers of flesh and blood, so He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” He therefore became man and was made lower than the angels, so that through death—not through His offering!—He might destroy him who employs the power of death.
In Hebrews 2:14b and 15 it then says: “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Here it is stated that He became man, that He suffered and died by the grace of God for all. Moreover, it says that He had to enter into death in order to overcome that death, for the goal was not His dying, but the goal was that He should create an exit from death. To accomplish that, He had to enter death so that He could also come out of it again, and thus overcome death. Thereby the power of Satan is broken, for Satan employs this weapon. And where death has been overcome and where on the other side of death there is simply an exit again, death is no longer a threat. “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me” (Psalm 23).
Thus, only in the introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews is mention made of His suffering and death, and then of His resurrection. In this connection absolutely nothing is said about a form of religion, about worship, or even about the Old Covenant. There is no mention of priests or offerings—nothing at all. What it is about is that in His resurrection from the dead this Christ has become the Firstborn of a new creation, and of that new creation He is the King and the High Priest. The epistle then speaks about what consequences this has. What that new creation looks like. What the consequences are now that we have become a new creature in Christ, and that the old things have passed away and all things have become new. The thought then is that in this we follow the example of the Lord Jesus, who placed Himself in the service of God, offered Himself therefore, and the intention is that we should indeed do the same.

Hebrews 2:9
9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.
The drift of verse 9 is that He should taste death for every man. That was by the grace of God. That means it was by the grace of God that the death of the Lord Jesus was indeed for all. This statement is especially connected with the statement in Titus: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” For one died for all, and the

preaching of that indeed means that God offers grace to every sinner, because one died for all. Whereupon one is expected to accept this grace. That is always the case with grace—you have to take hold of it. Immediately it states what the purpose of that suffering and death was. He would namely bring many sons to glory. Not only would He be brought to glory, but also many others, called at another point many brethren. For this it was necessary that He, as their Captain, should be perfected through suffering. That suffering is of course not suffering in general, but the suffering of death from verse 9. Therefore He partook of flesh and blood. Elsewhere it says: in the likeness of sinful flesh. So that He should become one with us and that He should die for us and in our place. But not only that, for that is not stated. It says: that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. The thought is that He rose from the dead for those sons. He died for all, but to bring many sons to glory, He rose from the dead. Through faith in Him we have a share in Him and a share in that calling to sonship. We are predestinated, foreordained to be appointed as sons (Ephesians 1:4–5).

- The Function of the High Priest

He brought about deliverance from death, so that we should no longer be subject throughout our whole life to the power of death, to the devil. His weapon has been rendered powerless. In Hebrews 2 it states why He had to be made like His brethren in all things.

Hebrews 2:17–18
17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.
18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted. The thought is that He became like us so that He should be able to sympathise with our infirmities and so that He should be able to make reconciliation for our sins. That is the function of the High Priest. The High Priest is the One who makes reconciliation for the sins of the people. That is His task. Not to save them—that is already done—but to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. So that the people should be able to serve God. That is the point. Not that they should be saved, for they are already saved, but that they should be able to serve God. That is why He makes reconciliation for their sins. Not for their salvation, but for their service. That is the function of the High Priest of the New Covenant. He makes reconciliation for the sins of the people so that the people should be able to serve God. That is the theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews. That is what it is about.

Not salvation, but service.
Not new birth, but service under the New Covenant.

Not coming to faith, but living by faith.
Not receiving eternal life, but living eternal life.
Not being saved, but living saved.
Not being born again, but living as born again.
Not being a new creature, but living as a new creature.
Not being a priest, but serving as a priest.

That DEFINES the Epistle to the Hebrews. Amen.

- Only High Priest of Many Brethren

This is perhaps the most misunderstood verse in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The thought is that in His suffering and death He took away the sins of the world, that He then rose from the dead as the Firstborn of a new creation and moreover was appointed High Priest. And that everyone who believes in Him has received a share in His resurrection life and thus in that new creation, and in that position Christ is the High Priest. Not of the old creation, not of all those sinners, and certainly not of unbelievers, but He is the High Priest of those many brethren. He is the High Priest of all those other sons. He is the Firstborn of those who live under the New Covenant and therefore He is the Firstborn of the Church, for up to now there is nothing else but that Church.
In Corinthians and Ephesians it is then said that He is the Head of the Church, but here He is called the High Priest of that people. That people, spoken of here, consists even to our days of the Church, the Church of firstfruits, whose names are written in heaven (Hebrews 12). He has been made like us in all things, and we are therefore like Him in all things. For we are human and partakers of flesh and blood, and we also partake of the divine nature, just like Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is also man, and when He rose from the dead on earth as the Firstborn of those who slept, He indeed had a body of flesh and bones. The tomb was also empty. That body was changed, yet He remained a man with a human body, and that is our situation now too. Human on the one hand, and on the other hand partaking of the divine nature. But within this whole category Christ is the Firstborn and therefore the Head and, if it must be so called, naturally also the King. In this epistle He is especially called the High Priest.

- The High Priest Is Responsible for All Religious Matters

The high priest is responsible for all religious matters of the people. The king is first and foremost responsible for all civil matters. Normally that is also the same: king and high priest. They are indeed two functions, but united in one and the same person. In England that officially still exists. The king or queen is at the same time also head of the church. Other names are used for it, but in practice that is what it means. The officially responsible for the conduct of affairs in the church. And in principle that is a biblical matter. But as far as we are concerned, we live in a new creation, of which Christ is the Head and therefore King and High Priest, and that of the New Covenant. He is not the High Priest of the world or of the sinner. They cannot be saved by the High Priest. For that is not His function. A person is saved on the ground of the death and resurrection of Christ, in which he believes. Nowhere in the Bible is it taught that the High

Priest would die and rise from the dead. That is not the task of the High Priest. On the contrary, the trouble was that the priests of the Old Covenant were unfortunately prevented by death from continuing (Hebrews 7:23). That strongly suggests that it is actually the intention that the priest should not die. Hence Christ did not become High Priest before His death, but after His resurrection. So that the High Priest of the New Covenant is indeed High Priest according to the power of life, on the ground of His birth, but moreover according to the power of an endless life. Therefore we have a High Priest who is not prevented by death from continuing for ever. He ever lives and can therefore also save us completely, perfectly.
The intention was that He should be a merciful and faithful High Priest. The function of the High Priest is to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Does the High Priest ensure that sins are taken away and that man is saved? No, for that is a misunderstanding. But if you wish to hold to those words and consider it no misunderstanding, I must tell you the following. The high priest is indeed the one who makes reconciliation for the sins of the people, so that that people is saved, but not according to the spirit, but according to the soul. For the High Priest is not the One who ensures that we are born again, for He is not the High Priest of those who are not born again. He is the High Priest of the New Covenant and of a new creation and therefore not of those who are merely part of an old creation. In short, a sinner must come to faith in Him whom God has raised from the dead. Who not only suffered and died, but also overcame death. Believe therefore in the One who did this work before He became High Priest. And the one who comes to this faith thereby receives a share in His people and in the resurrection of Christ. From the moment someone is born again, Christ is his High Priest. For He is the High Priest of His people, or the High Priest of His house. That is stated in Hebrews 3.

Hebrews 3:6
6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.
“Whose house are we.” They are not, we are. The world is not, but we are. So if in Hebrews 2:17 it says that He should be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, then it does not concern the reconciliation of the sins of the sinner in general. That He accomplished once for all in His suffering and death and resurrection. But here it concerns the reconciliation of the sins of the people. His people. Here it concerns the reconciliation of the sins that we as believers still commit, or have. Sins that would lead to death. That can no longer happen, however, because that penalty has already been borne for us and we already have a share in the resurrection from death. Although those sins in fact no longer have any effect, they do make us unfit to serve the living God. And especially the sins in our body. For this body is the body of sin, or sinful flesh. And how could we place that sinful flesh in His service? That can be done, not so much on the ground of the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, but on the ground of the fact that He is our Head. That is a matter of hierarchy.

- The High Priest Is the Mediator

We approach God through Christ. Another term for “High Priest of the New Covenant” is “Mediator of the New Covenant.” He stands in the midst between God and us. Not between God and man, but between God and the believer. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant. God does His work through the Lord Jesus Christ. Through His Son. If I put it abstractly, Christ is actually the executive Organ of the Godhead. Or: Christ is the active Power of God. Or: Christ is the Personification of God. All that amounts to the same thing. Hence it makes little difference whether in our prayer we call upon God or upon Christ.

We are blessed with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. God sees us perfect in Christ. In short, if Christ were not there and we had to go directly to the Godhead as such, then we are who we are—indeed with the divine nature in us and new life in us—but as regards the outward appearance we would be completely unclean. But our communication with God is not on personal title, not on the ground of who we simply are, with a great many virtues and a few vices, or vice versa, but God sees us in Christ, and Christ is perfect. For He is responsible for our service. And you do not want to say that Christ cannot bear that responsibility or that He has been given a task He cannot fulfil. He stands guarantee for it, and He is the One who mediates between God and us, and therefore we can indeed serve God, for God sees us perfect in Christ. That is the function of the High Priest.

Suppose we commit two sins every day. Would that then mean we cannot serve the living God? That is a matter of conscience. The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us namely that through the offering of Christ, because He placed Himself in the service of God, we are purged from an evil conscience, or that our consciences are purged from dead works (Hebrews 9:14) to serve the living God. We are not purged from dead works, but our consciences! Nothing more is needed. We therefore no longer have knowledge of dead works. They play no role in our thoughts, and certainly not in our religious thoughts, for before God we are perfect. We are made perfect in Christ. And therefore we are called to serve God. For that purpose He has purged our consciences.

It is not about our works according to the flesh, for God does not reckon them, and insofar as they have consequences, they are burned up anyway: wood, hay, and stubble. God does not count them. It is about the fact that despite the fact that we are sinners, we should nevertheless serve God, because our sin problem has been solved. We believe that and live out of that faith, therefore we stand clean before God. We are not better than the world. We are not better than any other sinner, but we are reconciled to God. For we live from this High Priest, who stands guarantee for it. God sees only Christ. God does not see us according to the old man. God sees only that in us which is of Christ. That is an important truth.

- That Is Not Universal Reconciliation

For universal reconciliation means that in the end all people will be saved. I have often noticed, however, that some people do not know this and

think that universal reconciliation means that God has taken away all our sins, but that is not the traditional meaning of the term. It is, however, the reason why for years I have been accused of preaching the doctrine of universal reconciliation. That is not true. On the contrary. This is not called universal reconciliation; it is called the all-sufficiency of Christ. And I deliberately use that term now, because it is an old, traditional theological term. The all-sufficiency of Christ means that what Christ has done was sufficient for everything. But that certainly does not mean that all people are saved.
In fact, all the New Testament epistles state that we have been cleansed, that we have been made perfect in Christ—at least according to the spirit—so that we, for that is the purpose for which God has already done this, should present our sinful bodies in His service and thus offer them to Him. That is the intention. Why else would God, in the middle of salvation history, have the Lord Jesus overcome death and leave us with the problem that, although we are now born again and new creatures, we all feel and experience that we are old creatures? And that we live under the power of sin, and even more so than before we came to faith, we have to do with the adversary, with unbelief, and with the power of the evil one. That we are strangers and sojourners here, but otherwise feel completely at home nowhere. Why is that? God has expressly given us now already the life of that new creation, the life of Christ, so that we—while still living in our old sinful body, which still belongs to the old creation and was even begotten from it—should serve the living God. In spite of sin. That is a splendid victory over the great adversary, who has made us unfit for every good work, or who has made us useless, so that no good dwells in anyone, for all have turned aside; together they have become unprofitable. Yet, although by earthly and Old Testament standards we fall into that category, the fact is that God does His work in us and even through us, and that God uses our sinful beings—even our bodies—for the honour of His Name. That is, in practice, the function of Christ, the High Priest.

- Perfect in Christ

We should always be conscious that our relationship with God runs through Christ, and God sees Christ, and Christ is perfect. No one can come to God except through Christ. “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” So either we are dead in sins and trespasses before God, or we live in Christ and are perfect in Him according to the spirit. That latter—that we are perfect according to the spirit—has as its purpose that we should also be saved, or blessed, or perfected according to the soul. Namely, in our manner of life. Originally, the intention was that the creature should live to the honour of the Creator, but together they have turned aside and become unprofitable, and so on. Nevertheless, through new birth we are placed in a position in which we as creatures of God can indeed serve God with our whole being and give Him honour. And as firstfruits we are in that connection automatically kings and priests under the New Covenant.

So when Hebrews 2 says that the High Priest exists to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, those are not the sins of the sinner as such, so that he might perhaps one day get to heaven. But they are the sins that are committed—and they are there—in the life of the believer who lives under the New Covenant. The thought of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that those sins play no role, that they have been nullified and have no power or effect in our service to God. That those sins do indeed have a practical effect in our social life and sometimes also in our relationship with our brethren and sisters cannot be denied. That is so. But that is not what we are talking about. We are talking about whether those sins stand in the way of our relationship with God. The answer is: no, they do not stand in the way—unless we do not believe that Christ is our High Priest. The One who not only once brought about the purification of our sins, but also the One who now sanctifies and cleanses us, keeps us clean, keeps us in a position whereby we can indeed serve the living God. What it is about is that in the practice of our life we should first learn that whatever happens in our life, whatever we do, our relationship with God cannot be broken. The new life we have cannot be taken away. The sins we commit cannot prevent us from serving God. For the simple reason that our relationship with God does not rest on our works, for then we should never have been saved. Then we could at best be saved when we are dead. But we have already died, and since we live we have the life of Christ, and that is the life that God knows. Since that life dwells in this earthly vessel, it means that this earthly vessel should also actually be placed at the disposal of the life that God has placed in it.

What we place at His disposal is the life that He first gave us Himself, so that He might use it. Namely, new life. In short, we have received life from Him so that we should place that same life, including the vessel in which that life dwells—our body therefore—in His service. For that old life we do not give to Him. That old life He has already put away in death. Otherwise you end up with the idea that we, while living in the flesh, should try our best to be acceptable to God, to draw near to God. Many Christians think that is how it works, but that is the misunderstanding. We must first learn that God has put away our whole old man and that He has given us new life on the ground of faith in the risen Christ. Even though that is indeed in the earthly vessel. We have the life of that new creation and are firstfruits of that new creation. The intention is that we should present our bodies as weapons, instruments, tools, and nothing more than that. An instrument of righteousness. The life that He has given us, including the earthen vessel in which He has placed us (2 Corinthians 4), we should place at His disposal, so that He may use it.

What then about the sin that dwells in the vessel? That is not such a problem. What it is about is first: we are saved according to the spirit. Second: then it is the intention that we should be saved in our manner of life. That is the salvation of the soul, the practical service to the Lord. And third: as regards the body, that will be saved, but only on His day, namely at the redemption of our body, and that is actually only at the rapture of the Church. That body therefore disappears of its own accord. But as long as this body is still here, although it is a sinful body, God wants to use it.

What else would be the purpose of the fact that He has already granted us His life now? Then He could have waited until the day of our death or until the Last Day, or until the day of the rapture of the Church. As if to say: as soon as we lay aside this body, we get another life. That would probably have been good enough for each of us, but the Lord has determined otherwise. He has already given us new life now and reckons the old man no more. Then we are, in the second place, called to present the life we have received from Him by His grace, as sincere creatures, in the service of the Creator and in this connection even in the service of the Creator of a new creation.
He has solved our sin problem. If you do not believe that, then you suffer from an evil conscience. Living by faith presupposes that you first believe that you stand clean before God, regardless of who you are. If you believe that, then you are fit to serve the living God indeed. It will be clear that I am not advocating that you simply pay no attention to your sins and therefore carry on sinning (Romans 6), for you have not been cleansed from your sins in order to carry on with them, but in order to serve the living God. For that purpose He has delivered us from these things. That is not milk, but solid food. 5.

- The Shepherd and the Sheep

In the Epistle to the Hebrews (chapters 3 and 4) it is written about making reconciliation for the sins of the people. About the phenomenon that once the whole of Israel was delivered out of Egypt, so that in the wilderness a delivered people was gathered. Thereby that people is a type of the Church. That delivered people was expected to serve God, but it rebelled. Although one belonged to that delivered people, in practice one refused to serve the living God. In 1 Corinthians 10 it is essentially the same principle. On the one hand having a share in the deliverance, but on the other hand not serving the living God. Hebrews 3 and 4 speak about this, with the practical application that we should draw near with boldness to that Throne of Grace. Not to be saved, not to be delivered—for we already were—but to place ourselves under the government of grace and thus surrender ourselves to the service under the New Covenant. To serve that Grace who sits on the throne. And He who sits on the throne in turn serves His heavenly Father. The intention is therefore that Christ and the Church serve the living God, and that we as believers, as the Church, are presented as a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice to God. In chapter 5 that theme is actually discussed for the first time. There the term “offering” is used for the first time.

Hebrews 5:1
1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:
Afterwards it is referred to several more times. In the first place, it is not so much about the offering, but about the One who brings that offering, namely the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec: The High Priest of the New Covenant. The thought of verse 1 is clear. It was the intention

that every high priest under the Old Covenant should offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. In this epistle a comparison is made between the priesthood and service under the Old Covenant and the priesthood and practical service under the New Covenant. As one served under the Old Covenant, so we should now serve under the New Covenant. We are called to serve God actually under that New Covenant and to live according to the standards and laws of that New Covenant. And therefore not according to the standards and laws of the Old Covenant.
What is to be done in things pertaining to God is in any case the offering of gifts and sacrifices for sins. Gifts and sacrifices are not two different things. It means: gifts, namely sacrifices. From the many Scripture passages about offering it is clear that the word “offering,” or its variants, is synonymous with “gifts.” Sometimes they are even translated interchangeably. It then says “gift,” but it is translated as “offering.” The English word “offer” also means “gift.” I then prefer the word “offering” in the sense of “presentation.” In everyday language the word “offer” is not used. In the KJV Bible, it is understood hundreds of years ago. “To offer” means nothing more than “to give”; something that is presented. Under the Old Covenant every high priest was taken from among men to do something for men. In any case to represent man before God, and for that something had to be done by that high priest. He had to do it on behalf of the people, thereby taking the place of the people toward God. He had to offer something: gifts, namely sacrifices for sins. That high priest is the representative before God for all religious or divine matters of the people. In this verse it says “men,” but it is not the case that the high priests of the Old Covenant represented all men before God. The high priest represented only his own people. He did not make reconciliation for the sins of all men, but only of all men who belonged to the people. Reconciliation therefore for the sins of the people. Christ is not the High Priest of the world, but of His people. He is the High Priest of the believers, and now that is the Church.
The high priest of the Old Covenant, through the gifts he offered, brought about reconciliation between God and the people. He did this to make it possible for that sinful people nevertheless to be God’s people and for that people to be able to serve the living God under the Old Covenant (in Hebrews this specifically concerns the service on the Day of Atonement). All these things are a picture of New Testament truth. The Epistle to the Hebrews says that, just as the first Epistle to the Corinthians does. But these things, which were instituted under the Old Covenant, did not really work. They were a portrayal of the situation as it would arise under the New Covenant in general and under our church dispensation in particular. Namely, the situation of a delivered people, gathered out of the Gentiles, in faith in Moses, but then the True One. A delivered people who have gone out outside the camp, delivered from slavery, from sin, from the law, and from death. With the intention that we should acknowledge and come to understand this High Priest and that through the service of this High Priest we should indeed be holy and blameless before God, so that we, as a New Testament people of God, should serve this living God. Not under the law, for then we might just as well have had an Aaronic high priest,

but under grace. Not under the Old Covenant, but under the New Covenant.
From the preceding chapters we have at least learned that the Lord Jesus Christ is this High Priest of the New Covenant and that He became so on the occasion of His resurrection from the dead. The risen Christ: raised from the dead and placed before God in the things to be done there, in the true sanctuary. In the following chapters this is confirmed. Entered into heaven itself, into the true sanctuary, to appear there before the real ark of the covenant, namely before the face of God. And there He would bring an offering. What offering then? The answer is: His life! Therefore not His death. For that is the peculiar thing: we speak of someone's life and then think of someone's death. I recently read somewhere in the newspaper that there had been an accident and that it had cost three deaths. But of course it had cost three lives. It is very strange that the concepts of death and life somehow get mixed up. Not only in the evangelical world, but also outside it. What the Lord Jesus as High Priest of the New Covenant offered was His life. That has absolutely nothing to do with His death on the cross. That is completely ruled out. He offered His life. But when someone offers his life, that does not mean he dies. When someone offers his life, that means he gives his life to something. Not gives it up, but gives it to something. To offer, to present, to make an offering, to give to something or someone. That is to devote his life to someone, something, or a certain task.
John 10 expresses exactly the same thought:

- The Lord Jesus lays down His life for the sheep.

The whole Gospel of John is essentially about Christ, the High Priest of the New Covenant, although the term is nowhere used there. He says: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." What benefit is there for the sheep if the shepherd dies? That was precisely the Old Testament problem. The high priests of the Old Covenant were prevented by death from continuing. A shepherd can indeed die, but that is not for the sheep, for the sheep gain nothing from that, for afterwards they wander as sheep without a shepherd, to use another biblical term. So when John 10 says: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," the Lord is not speaking about His death, but about the fact that He precisely has eternal life and therefore can perfectly save those who come to Him (Hebrews 7:25).The whole thought is that this Shepherd can and will perfectly care for His flock, because He is faithful to the One who appointed Him Shepherd (Hebrews 3:2). Then someone cleverly remarked: "But doesn't it say in that chapter that the same good shepherd says that as the Son of man He has power to lay down His life? Doesn't that concern His death?" But that is not how it reads. It says that He has power to lay down His life and to take it again. He is that good shepherd from the moment He takes His life again. That is what it is about. Then He becomes that Shepherd who indeed does not die. Who overcomes the adversary—the lion, the bear, and the leopard. That is of course drawn from David. The good shepherd is the One who lives. Who goes before the flock and leads them to bread, wine, and green pastures.

When it concerns people, it is bread and wine. And bread and wine are provided by the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. The good shepherd who goes before the flock is the Forerunner who has entered for us. That is Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, and we are His flock and therefore always walk behind Him. That is surely a familiar thought. It is stated correctly, but we read it wrongly. That is the case here too. He is High Priest and He would bring an offering, and He has offered His life as High Priest. Did He die then? No, precisely not. He devoted His life first to God, and it was according to God's will that He devotes His life in the practical service of or for the sheep. That is to say, for His people, His flock. He therefore fulfilled God's will and placed His life in the service of God, and God appointed Him as the Shepherd of the flock, or rather as the High Priest of the people. He is faithful in this—not so much to the flock, but to the One who appointed Him (Hebrews 3). That is New Testament truth. A living Christ who serves us and makes us able to serve God.It is the intention that a high priest in general should offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He must then also be able to have proper, fitting compassion on the ignorant and those who are going astray. That is only one category. For someone who is ignorant and does not know the way goes astray. Now one might refer to John 10 concerning the shepherd and the sheep: "for they all like sheep have gone astray without a shepherd." And why is the High Priest needed? He is the Shepherd. He leads the flock. He cares for the ignorant and those who go astray. That is exactly the same thought. "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." I hardly ever dare to read this verse aloud without commentary. I always feel inclined to apologise for the fact that it says of the High Priest that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. Christ, who Himself is compassed with infirmity. Is He then weak? We do not use the expression "compassed with infirmity" in everyday language. Therefore one no longer understands such an expression and has to find a synonym for it. At any rate, He has an infirmity. The meaning is that He has a weakness for the ignorant and those who go astray. He loves them. I never know how to say this properly without going too deeply into it, but I believe that one of the greatest weaknesses of man is that he can love. That is called "having a weakness for something or someone." That is a weakness. If you did not love, you could go through life much more principled. Then you would make your decisions and could think about everything much more detachedly. If God were not a God of love, the Lord Jesus would not have had to die. Then none of this would have had to happen, and God would simply have been a righteous God. Straightforward: law is law; rule is rule, and the soul that sins shall therefore die. Full stop. We call that hard-hearted. That is not weak, but strong. But at the same time unsympathetic. However, God is love, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the expression of that love. He looked with compassion on harlots and tax collectors. He could have compassion—and indeed did have it, and certainly still has it—on the ignorant and those who go astray. On sinners, namely. Therefore He Himself is also compassed with infirmity. But infirmity is not something negative. If that

infirmity were not there, the Kingdom on earth would long ago have been realised and manifested. For the delay of the manifested Kingdom over 2000 years springs from the longsuffering of God. And someone who is longsuffering or patient for 2000 years we call weak. But He is strong enough to compensate for that weakness in due time. Do not worry. What it is about is that it is said of the Lord Himself that He is compassed with infirmity. Do not be mistaken, for He is still man. He also experienced certain things here on earth. He can therefore have fitting compassion on us who are ignorant and go astray. But He has that course behind Him, and to Him has been given all power in heaven and on earth. He is therefore also the One who in all circumstances is able to provide help where it is needed to bring back those who go astray. He seeks out the straying sheep and brings it back.
It is true that the first verses of Hebrews 5 speak about the high priest after the order of Aaron. But the description of him is deliberately given, through the word “for” in verse 1, in such a way that it fully applies to the New Testament High Priest. Moreover, the things mentioned here connect with chapter 2:

Hebrews 2:17
17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.
And in the parallel passage it says:

Hebrews 5:1
1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:Then in verse 18 of chapter 2 it says:

Hebrews 2:18
18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.
That is what it is about. That the things that happened to us in the past also happened to the Lord Jesus. Bear in mind, however, that our circumstances are indeed not the same as the circumstances of the Lord Jesus, but that is not really what it is about. The difficulties for which we need help do not so much consist of the circumstances themselves, but lie between the ears. Those difficulties are in our head, or actually in our heart. It is not about the circumstances themselves, but about the way we react to those circumstances. And not consciously, not because we want to, but because we cannot do otherwise. And the whole thought is that the Lord Jesus also experienced these things as man and had to live with them, so that He indeed knows what is in us. Man is often not a match for the circumstances that come upon him, with his thoughts and feelings. If we had no feelings, we would not have these infirmities either and we would be much better able to cope with circumstances. There is also a English saying: a man suffers most from the suffering he fears. The suffering he fears is not really there, but is in his head or in his heart. The

Lord Jesus was and still is man, and He therefore knows these things. He also explicitly experienced them. That is why the suffering of the Lord is spoken of so emphatically. But when people speak of the suffering of the Lord, nine out of ten think it concerns His crucifixion, whereas in most cases it is about the suffering during His earthly walk. That is undoubtedly the thought of Hebrews 2:18. It will be clear that that suffering has nothing to do with the suffering of death, but with practical life. He knew that suffering, and we perhaps know it too, but He knows ours. Therefore He can come to our help in it. Therefore He is pre-eminently the One who knows what we need and who indeed provides help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Hebrews 5:2
2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity;
This verse concerns priests in general, but especially the priests of the Old Covenant. If it were only about the Old Testament high priests, it would have to say: “for that he himself also was compassed with infirmity.” In the past tense, therefore. Because this verse is in the present tense, I think that in this connection it speaks about the Old Testament priests, but that it has the New Testament Priest in mind.

Hebrews 5:3
3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.
Because of the infirmity, because of being human with everything that entails, the high priest had to offer for sins both for the people and for himself. He had to give something, bring gifts for sins.

Hebrews 5:4
4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.
Aaron was the first high priest of the Old Covenant. A man does not make himself high priest, but is appointed by God.

Hebrews 5:5
5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.
From verse 5 onwards it concerns Christ. In the first four verses it concerns both. It speaks about the Old Testament high priests, but has the New Testament High Priest in mind. At verses 4 and 5 it divides. Wherever in the New Testament Christ is spoken of as glorified and crowned with honour and glory, one can therefore think of His high priesthood—even if the expression is not added. Christ is glorified, and that includes among other things that He has become High Priest. He did not glorify Himself to become High Priest. When Hebrews 2 says that we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, it therefore already concerns His high priesthood. In Psalm 8 obviously too, for that is where the expression comes from. In this verse two things are stated at once. First: who appointed Him High Priest,

and second: how or by what means, and even on what occasion, He appointed Him High Priest. He was appointed by the One who said to Him. That is God Himself. And God appointed Him by saying: “Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.” From that moment the Lord Jesus was not only appointed Son of God, but at the same time also High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.
“Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee” comes from Psalm 2.
Psalm 2:6–7
6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.
7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.
Here the term “High Priest” is not used. But in hindsight we certainly understand that that term speaks of the appointment of the High Priest of the New Covenant. For in verse 7 it says: “Thou art my Son…” and in Hebrews 5 it is said that this refers to His appointment as High Priest. In verse 6 it says that He has been set as King. Both things happen with the same words. For the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec is indeed also King after the order of Melchisedec. And moreover He is the Son of God: everything at once.
The statement “Thou art my Son…” is quoted in many places in the New Testament, such as in
Acts 13:33, 34b
God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.
34b And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead…Here the apostle Paul adds that this happened on the day Jesus was begotten from the dead. At His resurrection, therefore. In short, the statement “Thou art my Son…” is a statement about the man Jesus of Nazareth, whereby that man was appointed Son of God. Sonship is not a matter of birth, but it is the recognition of the child by the father, whereby that child is appointed heir by the adult. That the Lord Jesus is the manifested Godhead, the externalisation of the Godhead, is all true, but whether that is really so still had to be proved. Since His birth on earth He was Jesus of Nazareth. God had emptied Himself and taken the form of a servant and become like men. But God appointed this man, after He had died, as His Son, and for that occasion He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in heaven. That statement therefore has everything to do with the fact that God raises the Lord Jesus from the dead and supremely exalts Him and seats Him at His right hand and gives Him a Name above every name. A Name that is more excellent or “more fitting” than that of the angels, and that is a Name He has inherited (Hebrews 1).
According to the commentary in Acts 13, His appointment as Son took place on the occasion of His resurrection from the dead. It is then said that such a statement was also made on the occasion of His baptism. And that was years earlier. But that is exactly what I mean, for baptism pictures resurrection. The Lord immediately came up out of the water, and then the dove came and a voice came from heaven saying: “This is my beloved

Son, in whom I am well pleased.” So that His Son could in all boldness present His body as a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice to God.

Hebrews 5:6
6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.
That is a quotation from Psalm 110.
Psalm 110:4
4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.
It is remarkable that this statement is the only one—after Genesis 14—where the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec is spoken of. And it is remarkable that this statement is mentioned here not first, but second. The statement in Psalm 2:6 concerns first His Kingship. And in Psalm 2:7 it concerns the Son. King and Son therefore. But the Epistle to the Hebrews says that it concerns His appointment as High Priest. Only in second place is Psalm 110:4 quoted in Hebrews 5:6. The thought is that both statements concern exactly the same action: the resurrection of Christ and His appointment as Son and therefore actually Heir of God, whereby He becomes the Firstborn of a new creation and of the New Covenant and the Firstborn of the Church and His appointment as High Priest. Thus Christ is at once King, Priest, and Son.
Whereupon the question is: Why does God choose this man, Jesus of Nazareth, and appoint Him as His Son? We immediately think that this is because He was originally also begotten by God through the Holy Spirit who came upon Mary. That is not in itself a wrong thought, but Scripture does not say it that way. Therefore that should not be our first thought. For we always tend to think that the Lord Jesus in His walk on earth was actually God. And that is also true. But the point is that Scripture precisely teaches that in His incarnation He laid aside His Godhead. How one does that I do not know either, but Scripture says that is how it was. He was in the form of God, but He emptied Himself. He became like men. In some way He could lay aside that glory, as if it were a garment. That Godhead was in Him, but He emptied Himself and so only the covering remained. He was equal with God, but He became like men. When He lived on earth, He was man. Nothing more and nothing less. We are not now talking about where He came from and where He would go, but about who He was, living on earth. He was born and laid in a manger, and then He knew as little as you and I did when we were laid in the cradle. Do you think He knew the law by heart when He was born, or that He could speak? That is not biblical. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh and became like men. That is also evident, for twelve years later He was busy studying the Scriptures. He increased in knowledge. He had to learn and therefore He was man. He not only increased in wisdom by hearing things, learning, and understanding, but in Hebrews 5:8 it is also explicitly said that He learned obedience from the things He suffered. That was not His suffering on the cross. That was indeed the climax of His suffering; or rather the lowest point. His suffering concerned His whole life. The question was with

what reasoning God appointed this man as His Son? The biblical argument is found

Hebrews 5:7
7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;
He offered up prayers and supplications in the days of His flesh. The sentence is actually: “Who in the days of His flesh learned obedience.” People then think it refers to the obedience that Jesus learned with regard to His parents, but of course that is not what it is about here. Obedience is still the great synonym for faith. That is the same as: “Submitting oneself to….” Obedience means being subject. Submitting oneself to the one who has the power of the word. Who has the right to speak. Faith also means submitting oneself to the one who speaks. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh” (Hebrews 12:25). “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard” (Hebrews 2:1).
Of the Lord Jesus Christ it is said that He learned obedience. From what? From the Scriptures? Yes, perhaps so, for one can only believe in the Word. And that must have been the Scriptures. As a Man, even as a child, He therefore also searched the Scriptures. But He learned obedience from the things He suffered. His suffering contributed to the growth of His faith. Faith presupposes trust in God, in the One who has spoken. The Lord Jesus was the Believer. For every believer, suffering would contribute to the growth and building up of his faith. The believer would namely have to learn more and more to trust in what God has spoken. And in our case, in Christ, our High Priest, who has promised us grace, mercy, and help in time of need. For faith would be exercised. That simply happens in the practice of life. He suffered, with the result that He can come to our help and have proper compassion on the ignorant and those who go astray. “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18).
What did the Lord Jesus do when He was tempted and therefore suffered? Did He seek support from the local community? Did He pour out His heart to one of the brethren? There is nothing wrong with that in itself, but it is not the first option. For He offered up prayers and supplications. He learned obedience in the days of His flesh from the things He suffered. But when He suffered, He offered up prayers and supplications to the One who was able to deliver Him. He offered prayers and supplications to God. The thought is that we should set our hope on God, who has made promises, for that is the expression of faith. And as far as I know, there are many for whom prayer is precisely not the expression of faith, but of unbelief. I once knew a believer, a truly born-again person, who prayed that he might receive the Holy Spirit. But that had already happened long before; he simply did not believe it. That is where the problem lies. Then prayer is not the expression of faith, but of unbelief. Understand me correctly: that is not the case with everyone who prays such a prayer. Scripture says that everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ thereby receives new life and therefore the Holy Spirit. Anyone who knows that and prays that he

may receive the Holy Spirit thereby expresses his unbelief. It is not so much about the words spoken, or the literal content of the prayer, but about what is in the heart and what one really thinks in it. I also often enough pray for things I have already received long ago, and I know that very well, but that is simply to say that I am grateful to the Lord for it and that I live from His hand and am dependent on it. And if it does not so much depend on the words, but on the heart, then it is only about the heart. For if you ask me, the best prayers are entirely without words. Then it really comes only from the heart and not from the mouth or the lips.
Moreover, it remains the case that we should place our lives in the hand of God, and the consequence of that is not only that we should serve Him, but also that we are then His possession and His servants and therefore dependent on Him. That is set out at length, for example, in Romans 6. If you walk in sin, or serve sin, then you are a slave of sin. For a believer that can never be the intention. Where we present our members as instruments of righteousness, we are servants—slaves is the real word, bondservants—of righteousness. And where we are servants of Christ, we are His possession and He is the One who cares for us. And where we want to serve Him, we therefore place ourselves in dependence on Him. I say that emphatically, because some think that God wants us to serve Him because He needs us, because He is dependent on us. But that is a wrong thought. The biblical thought is that we should serve Him and therefore place ourselves in dependence on Him. That is a completely different matter.
When the Lord Jesus suffered in the days of His flesh, He did not merely pray and offer supplications, but He also offered them. By doing so He expressed His dependence and His subjection to His Father in heaven. That is the purpose of prayer. Where we do not do that in our prayers, prayer has no meaning at all. I do not find any other kind of prayer in the Bible. It is not about forms, obligations, standard phrases, or a fixed habit, but about placing ourselves in complete dependence on Him with our whole life. And that is what the Lord Jesus did. The Lord Jesus offered those prayers with strong crying and tears. Many people think it beautiful to utter a solemn prayer. They often admire that. But that is generally not the best prayer. The best prayer is this: with strong crying and tears. That means with the whole heart, with the whole being, whereby it indeed becomes evident that it is a matter of feelings and emotion, for that is where one suffers. Not outwardly, but in the heart. When that distress is brought to God, by definition it comes with strong crying and tears and loud shouting. When emotions are released, that happens too. One no longer has control over it. One no longer has control over the voice, and of course not over the tears either. That is how one places oneself in the hand of God. The Lord Jesus did that, and God was not angry about it. It was regarded by God as an offering.
He was heard in that He feared. That means that His prayers were heard by God on the ground of His fear of God. If you fear God, that means you want to submit yourself to God. And because He did that, He was not only heard and delivered from suffering, but He was even heard first. He rose first from the dead, so that He might be the first. And on that occasion He

was appointed as Heir. The intention is that we in the days of our flesh should serve the Lord, be faithful to Him. That is the same as believing in Him. And if we prove faithful, or prove our faith, we too shall in the future be recognised by God as sons. Not because we are already born of God—for on that ground we are children of God—but on the ground of the fact that we have proved faithful to our heavenly Father. On the ground of that faithfulness we too shall be appointed as sons, individually. You know the saying in the parable of the master who calls his servants to give account. The master then says: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” Why was that servant good? One had gained so much and the other so much, but they were all good. It does sound rather like good, better, best. They were good because they were faithful. That is all. It has nothing to do with how much or how little. It is first and foremost about faithfulness. And therefore possibly: “Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” That servant received cities or crowns, or whatever it may be called. He was appointed as son.

In verse 5 of Hebrews 5 it says: “Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.” That was quoted in Acts 13:33 and refers to Christ in His bodily resurrection. That reasoning fits perfectly. But the other reasoning is that it is said to the Son that He would rule the nations with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9). That also concerns Christ. That is true, but the same statement is quoted in Revelation 12:5, and there it concerns not so much, and certainly not exclusively, the Lord Jesus, but the whole Church. The man child who is born of the woman and caught up to God and to His throne is the man child who would rule the nations with a rod of iron. That is not merely the Lord Jesus, but the entire Church. But if the statement “Thou shalt rule the nations with a rod of iron” from Psalm 2:9 applies to the whole Church, then the statement “Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee,” quoted from Psalm 2:7, also applies to the Church. And that is so, but now we are still children of God and we are still waiting for our appointment as sons. That will happen at the redemption of our body. The statements made about the Lord Jesus at His bodily resurrection also apply to the Church at the rapture of the Church. The rapture is after all also the bodily resurrection of the Church, insofar as one can call it that. Here in Hebrews 5 those statements are indeed applied to the man Jesus, but that does not alter the fact that the same statements are just as well applied to the Church through other Scripture passages. That is so because in practice no great distinction is made between the Firstborn of the people and the whole people. Hence it is also explicitly said that He did not offer for Himself and for His people, as the Old Testament priests did, but that He offered one offering for both Himself and His people. For that is one whole. And what did He offer? Himself, namely His body. That is not for Himself or His people, for that is the same. His body is His people. In one matter, in one offering, not only He Himself but the whole Church was sanctified. It is one offering for the whole. An offering for sins. Not for His sins, for that cannot be, but for the sins of His people, the sins of His body and therefore yet the sins of Himself. But of course it is nowhere stated like that, for then you lose the thread of the argument. We

are part of the Body of Christ. We are the members of it and He is the Head. That Body still has form here on earth in sinful flesh. Those sins are put away by one offering. The sins are there, but they no longer play any significant role.
“for himself” in Hebrews 5:3 refers only to the high priests of the Old Testament. Therefore this chapter does not go into it further, but later in chapter 10 it is explained at length.

- The Slavery of Death

Hebrews 5:7
7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;
Here it is said of the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec that He offered those prayers and supplications to the One who was able to deliver Him from death. That automatically means that the content of those prayers concerned deliverance from death. He therefore prayed in the days of His flesh for deliverance from death. But in the days of His flesh He was not in death. Why then did He pray for deliverance from death? While one is in the flesh, one is subject to the power of death. So that in the days when one is in the flesh, one prays for deliverance from the power of death. That is also the drift of the statement in Hebrews 2.

Hebrews 2:14–15
14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
Christ, through His resurrection, destroyed him who had the power of death. That is the devil. And thus, through that resurrection, He would deliver all those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage or slavery to death. All their life they were, and we therefore, subject to the slavery of death. That is also what Hebrews 5:7 is about. The Lord Jesus prayed for deliverance from the slavery of death. And that prayer was indeed heard. He did enter death, but He also rose from it again. The consequence is that we too, who have a share in Him, are delivered from bondage to death. By nature we are subject to the slavery of death all our life. We fight all our life against death and against destruction. But we are no longer involved in that fight against death, because death has been overcome. Our outlook is therefore not on death, against which we fight, but our outlook reaches far beyond death. We do have a fight, but not against flesh and blood. Not against death and destruction, for that fight has been overcome. We stand in the fight when we serve the living God.
One can therefore pray for deliverance from death even before one has literally entered death, namely the realm of the dead. The term “death” is used many times in the Bible as a description of earthly life. Not always,

but often. And when there is doubt in the Bible about that concept, one also gets the expression “death and the grave.” Then it does not concern the slavery of death, but literally the realm of the dead. The Lord Jesus also prayed in the realm of the dead for deliverance from death. The Psalms are full of it. That is one of the fixed themes of the Psalms. For example: “I was compassed with the bands of death.” Who then? David? “No,” says Peter, “David was not. It was the Son of David.” The prayers of the Lord are recorded in the Psalms. But in those same Psalms you also find prayers concerning ordinary earthly life. We know the famous statement: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And a whole doctrine has been made of that: the God-forsakenness of the Lord Jesus when He hung on the cross. But that is a very great misunderstanding, for He was not forsaken by God. The quotation is not about that. These words of the Lord Jesus were the first part of Psalm 22. The sentence is not complete there. The full sentence reads:
Psalm 22:1
1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?
So it adds what that God-forsakenness consisted of. Namely, that God did not deliver the Lord Jesus from the cross. God was not far from the Lord Jesus, but far from His deliverance from the cross. But honestly, it was not that far, for it was no more than three days. Psalm 22 later adds that that deliverance did indeed come, namely by the One who prays being raised from the dead. And there is no doubt that this Psalm concerns the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus and everything that took place with it. The Psalm ends with the resurrection from the dead and the arising of the Church and the manifestation of His Kingdom and then the dawning of a new creation. It is all there. Not so explicitly, but it is there. The Lord’s prayer for deliverance from death was ultimately a prayer from the realm of the dead itself, but it was also a prayer He prayed at the cross and a prayer He prayed all His life. That prayer was also heard, and so it stands in Hebrews 5.

Hebrews 5:9
9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
In this verse it is first said that the Lord Jesus Himself was delivered from death and then that He has become the cause of eternal salvation to all who believe in Him. Here the unity of Christ and the Church is spoken of. There are two, for there is a distinction between Head and Body, but by emphasising that distinction our eyes are again closed to the unity that is precisely discussed in such terms. For if they were really two different things, there would be no life left and therefore no body either. The thought that Christ is the Head of the Body first expresses that there is a living, organic unity. That is also the case in all those other pictures. You have the Shepherd and the flock, and the Shepherd does not abandon the flock. So it is also with the High Priest and the people. That too is a unity. Hence in the following chapters it is set out how this High Priest brought

one offering for Himself and the people. Not because of the difference, but precisely because it is one. That is also said in chapter 2.

Hebrews 2:11a
11a For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one…It is therefore one whole. The fact that Christ is perfect before God is at once the guarantee and the certainty that the Church also stands perfect before God. And the fact that Christ offered up Himself means that He also offered up the Church, for they are all one.
The Gospel of John actually speaks of nothing else than the High Priest of the New Covenant and His people. In John 10 we have the story of the good Shepherd and His sheep, but all of it reaches its climax in the High Priestly Prayer. A prayer in which the Lord Jesus speaks of the unity of the Father, the Son, and those whom the Father has given to the Son, and who in turn are given by the Son to the Father, while the Father gives the Son to the Church. The Father gives the Son to the Church. The Father gives the Church to the Son. The Son gives the Church to the Father, and so on. People often read one text from that prayer: “That they all may be one.” They then say that the Lord wants us all to be one, so we must make sure that we all become one. As though He prayed that to us. But it is just the other way round. The Lord wants them all to be one, and therefore they are all one. The thought is that the Lord Jesus Christ went the way He had to go. He was ultimately made perfect, or mature, or appointed as Son by God, and so He has become the cause of eternal salvation to all. In this way we are one with Him. “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.” He is therefore the Firstborn among many brethren. He is the first Heir among many joint-heirs.

Hebrews 5:5, 8
5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.
8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;
There are several explanations for the fact that Hebrews 5:8 says “though he were a Son.” In the first place, I must point out that in verse 5 it is explicitly stated that He was appointed Son at His resurrection from the dead. That means that the Lord Jesus was not the Son before His resurrection, but that was already stated in chapter 1.

Hebrews 1:4–5
4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.
5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
The Lord Jesus inherited that title, and that means He did not have that title before. When we show from Scripture what the term “Son of God” means, it will become clear that this title also applies without qualification to JEHOVAH in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament JEHOVAH is the

revelation, the externalisation of the Godhead. He is there the express image of God's person. The thought then is that He was already the Son before He became Man, and that while He was Man He was not the Son. And He was then appointed Son again at His resurrection from the dead. The hesitation I have is that although these things are found in the Bible, they are not expressed with the term "Son," but with the name "Lord." He was the LORD. He was JEHOVAH, He became Jehoshua, and afterwards it is said of Jehoshua that in His resurrection He was appointed JEHOVAH, the Lord, and thereby Christ. The same thought can therefore also be applied with the term "Son." He was the Son and He became child, and afterwards He became the Son again. Hebrews 5:8, however, is the only Scripture passage that gives occasion for this theory, and therefore I hesitate to say this.

According to yet another theory, He would even have been the Son before this present world. I am inclined to read the statement "though he were a Son" as "though he would be the Son." There are countless Scripture passages that state at length that He was appointed Son at His resurrection from the dead. That does not alter the fact that certain expressions are used prematurely, so to speak. That may be difficult for many, but that is simply how it can be. One can speak of Christ as the Son of God who lived on earth. Not in the sense that He was the Son, but that He is the Son now. Before He became that, that Son lived on earth in the flesh. The Son lived on earth in the flesh, only not as the Son. But He would be and He has since become so. In exactly the same way one speaks of the suffering of Christ. But the Lord Jesus only became the Christ at His resurrection from the dead. So when the Bible speaks of the suffering of Christ, it evidently concerns His suffering now, since His resurrection from the dead. The term "the suffering of Christ" or "the cross of Christ" concerns the suffering of the One who now is the Christ. He has become precisely through that suffering the One He now is, namely Christ. I am inclined to read Hebrews 5:8 within that same framework.

Hebrews 5:8

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

It is normal that a child is first born and that this child is later recognised as son. That is biblically more justifiable than that the Lord Jesus was also the Son before His incarnation. The Lord Jesus also says: "Before Abraham was, I am." That is something different from saying that He was already the Son before Abraham. Moreover, the Lord does not call Himself the Son of God. He does so in one very rare case, but then more suggestively than explicitly. In the Bible one regularly speaks of a woman who bears a son. Eve also bore a son: Cain. Strictly speaking, women do not bear sons, but children, who will later be sons. And anticipating the future, that child is then already called a son. That phenomenon is the reason why in English we no longer know the difference between child and son. The Lord Jesus would also be the Son, but that did not happen automatically. He would first have to learn to be faithful. For us it is certain that the Lord Jesus,

who was born, would do everything that was written of Him in the Old Testament. But then we get the discussion whether the Lord Jesus had a will and whether He could be unfaithful and whether He could even sin. Those are the familiar theological discussions, but they all arise from the question whether man has a free will. And if someone knows the future, the conclusion often drawn is that the future is thereby determined and nothing can be changed in it.
From the Old Testament we learn about the Lord Jesus that He would be born as man, that He would grow up and live in dependence on His heavenly Father, and that on that ground He would ultimately be appointed as Son and Heir. That future was indeed foretold, but it still had to be proved whether it would actually happen. The Lord Jesus would first have to make that come true. Although we know that He was and would be the Son, He would in His life have to meet certain conditions to bring it about. And although God knew—and the prophets knew, and we knew—that it would come to that, it still had to be seen. It was not all so self-evident. Hebrews 5:8 points to that. The Lord Jesus had to be filled with the Word when He was born, just like every man. People are often startled by that thought. They are so accustomed to thinking that He was perfect and God, but the baby in the manger still had life ahead of Him and had to learn everything. So it was still a matter of waiting to see what would come of it. Because we know the history and therefore stand after the facts, we do not occupy ourselves with that thought and find it the most normal thing in the world that it turned out that way. People also find it perfectly normal that the Lord Jesus performed all kinds of miracles, because He was after all the Son of God. Scripture does not speak of it that way.
It may be true on the one hand that the Lord Jesus contradicted His religious contemporaries with all authority, but I leave it to you to contradict your religious contemporaries as a religious man. You do not do that lightly. Just read what He said to them. Quite a lot of His being came to the surface. In the Gospels not too much, but enough nonetheless. And if you want to know what He really thought and what went on in Him, then you should read the Psalms; all 150 of them. It did not all happen automatically. That brought much struggle and suffering with it. And self-overcoming and self-denial and in all cases placing His trust in the One who was able to deliver Him from death. He had to learn that and He did learn it. He remained perfectly faithful, despite being man and compassed with infirmity. With feelings, emotions, and tears. He even sweat blood. It is about that Man. And we say that He is the Son of God. But whether He Himself was so certain of that is still very much the question. I cannot give an answer to that either. He believed in the joy that was set before Him and therefore endured the cross and despised the shame, with the result that He now indeed sits at the right hand of God.

- Justification by Faith

That the Lord Jesus rose from the dead is the result of His faith. For whoever believes is saved, even though he dies. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and all the Old Testament believers will one day be raised on the

Last Day. And if that applies to all those Old Testament believers, for example those of Hebrews 11, then it certainly applies to the Old Testament Believer from the first verses of Hebrews 12, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. There are two reasons for the fact that the Lord Jesus was raised as Firstborn. The first is because He was indeed the perfect Believer. He was the Believer par excellence, with the greatest, strongest, and fullest faith one can imagine. Therefore God raised Him first, for the simple reason that as the First He would also receive the highest rights of the new creation. The other reason can be guessed. That is the one of Christmas. After all, He was as man indeed begotten by God. God expressly ensured that His own Man-child was raised first from the dead, so that He might be the First in all things and among all.
That He was raised is purely on the ground of faith. It usually does not dawn on us that He was a Believer, and indeed par excellence. He was not the One who automatically placed His trust in His heavenly Father because He was after all born of Him or because He was after all God manifested in the flesh. Which by the way is not a biblical expression at all, although very well known. But it is about the fact that He lived as man on earth and with the high calling wherewith He was called He had the responsibility to place His life in God's hand. He did that and therefore He is the Firstborn of a new creation. And we should look to Him while running our course, so that we too in the days of our flesh might learn obedience. In the first place from the Word of God, with which we would let ourselves be filled, and in the second place from what we suffer, so that we might afterwards have a share in His position as Firstborn of a new creation. So that it might also be said to us: "Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee." So that we with Him might rule the nations with a rod of iron. We have a share in Him, and nobility obliges.

Hebrews 5:9–10
9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.
Immediately in His resurrection He is connected with those who are sanctified. Or with the many brethren or with the great Church, in the midst of which He would stand. In that position, as Firstborn of the brethren, He was called by God a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. The following words are now easily understood:

Hebrews 5:11–14
11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.
12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.
13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.
14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who

by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
If one does not understand it, then you are immature and like a child who needs milk. It is precisely about having a share in the mature, the perfect Christ from verse 9 and standing mature in Him. But that it is a difficult matter we have meanwhile understood. The apostle Paul introduces things that he does not immediately explain, but does already place firmly in our minds, so that we should think about them. Only chapters later does the apostle then go into those things further. For example: in Hebrews 5:1, 3, and 7 offering is spoken of. In the first two verses it is spoken of that something would be offered, and in verse 7 it is “only” spoken of offering prayers and supplications, and for the rest it is not yet gone into. That is even postponed until chapters 9 and 10. We should first learn to understand the position of Christ as High Priest of the New Covenant. His position as Firstborn of those who are sanctified and therefore as Head of the Church. Only then is the consequence drawn from it. Namely, that He not only became High Priest and that we have a share in Him, but also that He brought an offering, an offering in which we too have a share. One offering, namely Himself, namely the whole Church, namely us all.

- Melchisedec

At the end of chapter 5 and throughout chapter 6, the apostle pauses for a moment. The actual subject of this epistle only comes up again properly in Hebrews 7. In the last verse of Hebrews 6 the writer picks up the thread once more.Hebrews 6:20
20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.
This statement had already appeared at the end of chapter 2. What this shows is with how much hesitation the apostle approaches this subject. He says the same thing again at the end of chapter 4 and in chapter 5. Then again at the end of chapter 6. And only then—in chapter 7—does the apostle finally go into his subject definitively. This expresses clearly enough that the apostle is aware it is a theme that does not generally appeal to people. It deals after all with invisible things. The message that Christ is seated at the right hand of God stands in contrast to the expectation that the Christ would be seated on the throne of His father David, with all the earthly consequences that would entail. The idea that Christ is seated at the right hand of God and has received a position there is found in all the New Testament books of the Bible. What is distinctive about the Epistle to the Hebrews is first and foremost that Christ in that special position receives the title of High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. But that is nothing more than what is already brought forward in the other epistles and in the Gospels. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said that the Christ, in that position, has brought an offering —namely Himself. This also becomes clear from the last chapters of the epistle, for there all these things are directly applied to us and what the practical consequence is for our manner of life. In Hebrews 7 Melchisedec is gone into further.

Hebrews 7:1
1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;
This Melchisedec appeared to Abraham. This king was evidently a powerful man, and he appeared after the battle had already been fought. So actually too late. But typologically, the appearing of Melchisedec after the battle had been fought means this: the battle was fought in those days by the Lord Jesus during His walk on earth, culminating in His suffering and death and actually extending to His resurrection. When the battle had been fought and he who had the power of death was destroyed, Melchisedec appeared there. When the Lord Jesus had fought the battle, the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec appeared there, namely Christ. The One who received a position at the right hand of God. So when we speak of Melchisedec, we are speaking of what happened after the battle had been fought. And when we speak of the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, we are speaking of the Lord Jesus in His position after He had completed the battle and achieved the victory. This Melchisedec of Genesis 14:18 is no one other than Christ. The high priests of the Old Covenant after the order of Aaron were prevented by death from continuing for ever, but the High Priest of the New Covenant after the order of Melchisedec continues for ever. If there ever was a historical figure named Melchisedec who was high priest after the order of Melchisedec, then that means He still is. For the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec is, according to Hebrews 7:16, after the power of an endless life. He is therefore not prevented by death from continuing for ever. Melchisedec was therefore no one other than the Lord Himself, for He has the power of an endless life. Thus Melchisedec was an appearance of the Angel of the LORD, or of the Angel of the Covenant. These are appearances known in theological circles as Christophanies. That means it was an appearance of Christ, even before He was the Christ. In fact, JEHOVAH appears there in His capacity as the Christ, before He would definitively be the Christ. One then also speaks of a pre-appearance of Christ. I do not say this because I particularly like to align myself with theological reasoning, but to indicate that this line of thought is fairly widely known. Although Melchisedec is usually not counted as a Christophany. But I regard Him as absolutely the same as Christ.

- King of Salem and King of Righteousness

This Melchisedec appears to Abraham, and thereby it is immediately explained why Abraham paid tithes to Him. Abraham after all acknowledged no superiors except the Lord Himself, yet he acknowledged Melchisedec as his superior. The reasoning that Melchisedec was king of Jerusalem is rather premature, for Jerusalem did not yet exist in those days. As far as that city did exist, it was not called Jerusalem or Salem, but Jebus. That Melchisedec was king of Salem is not a historical designation, but a title he used. That title means “King of Peace.” So it also stands in Hebrews 7:2. He was not only King of Salem, therefore King of Peace, but He was also King of Righteousness, for that is what His name means. Peace in general is the designation of the New Covenant, which is after all

the Covenant of Peace. The King of Peace is therefore by definition also the King of the New, or eternal, Covenant. And that New Covenant is one of the themes of this Epistle to the Hebrews.
In Romans 1 and 3 it is set out how the righteousness of God is established and revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ. And how this same righteousness of God is preached and revealed in the Gospel. The Gospel is nothing other than the preaching of the New Covenant. That preaching means that the righteousness of God has been established through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Then it is said of Melchisedec that he was without father, without mother, without genealogy, and that he had neither beginning of days nor end of life. That does not mean that we do not know who His father or mother was, or what His descent was, because we have no genealogy of Him. You might perhaps say that when you read Genesis 14, but when you read Hebrews you find there the inspired explanation of the figure and the history of the appearance of Melchisedec. Here it does not say that we do not know His father and His mother. Here it says that He was without father, without mother, without genealogy. And He had neither beginning of days nor end of life. Who is He then? There is only one Man who is without father, without mother, and that is the Man who is the Son of God. That is the Man according to God’s image and after God’s likeness. He became like the Son of God. And that Son of God remains Priest for ever.
Now we could start a discussion about when Christ then became High Priest. For if Melchisedec is the same as Christ and already appeared to Abraham, then He would already have been High Priest there. And if it is said here of Melchisedec that He became like the Son of God and that He remains Priest for ever, then we immediately stand on different ground and say that He perhaps always was. That is in itself a nice conclusion, but it is in conflict with what is precisely said about this in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Namely, that He was not always that, but that He received that function of High Priest on the occasion and on the ground of His resurrection from the dead. So there is nothing left but to draw the conclusion that Melchisedec was a foreshadowing of who the Messiah would later be. You can also regard it as an announcement of who the Messiah would be. That also has historical importance, for it means that the New Covenant, of which Christ would be the High Priest, was already announced to Abraham.
If, according to the Epistle to the Galatians, 430 years later a priesthood is instituted after the order of Aaron, then that is not the highest priesthood there is, nor the priesthood with the oldest rights, for a priesthood had already been announced through the appearance of Melchisedec in Genesis 14. That is undoubtedly the intention, for that is used in the argument of the Epistle to the Romans, but especially in the argument of Galatians 3, and also here in the argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The law is all very well and very interesting, but there is something even older. And older than the law is the promise to Abraham. And part of that promise is the promise of a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. If Melchisedec were not the Son of God who remains Priest for ever, then we would here be dealing with a historical figure whose priesthood is

subsequently taken over by the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus would then be the Heir of Melchisedec. But then you could never again say that the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec does not die. For Melchisedec would then have died. If Melchisedec did not die and therefore continues for ever, then the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, for then there would now be two high priests. So you end up in great chaos. It can only be in one way. Melchisedec is no one other than a pre-appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. The promise to Abraham is after all older than the law and therefore also has older and higher rights than the law. So it stands in Galatians 3 and possibly in Romans 4.

Hebrews 7:4–5
4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.
5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:
The thought in these verses is that the Levitical priests take tithes from the people and are thereby placed above the people, but that Levi, who was still in Abraham's loins (verse 10), paid tithes to Melchisedec. Melchisedec is therefore much higher than any Levite or any Levitical or Aaronic priest. That is of course correct, for He was the Son of God. In the Gospels we find genealogies of the Lord Jesus, but in the Gospel of John, in which the Lord Jesus is actually spoken of as High Priest of the New Covenant after the order of Melchisedec, we find no genealogy. There He is equated with God. It is almost impossible to study the Gospel of John without laying the Epistle to the Hebrews alongside it, and vice versa. From verse 4 to verse 10 it is set out that the Levitical priests held a much lower position, however high they were, than this Melchisedec, of whom no one has heard anything more since Genesis 14. His name is only mentioned again in Psalm 110, where it is said to the Messiah, to the Son of David: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." The next time you encounter Melchisedec is in Hebrews, and it is also the last time. Outside Genesis 14 He is always applied to Christ.

Hebrews 7:11
11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?
Another priest is not another priest after the order of Melchisedec, but a priest who would not be after the order of Aaron. The otherness of this Priest is therefore that He is after the order of Melchisedec.
Psalm 110:4b
4b … Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.
If perfection had been brought about by the Levitical priesthood, why then is a Priest announced in Psalm 110:4, not from Levi, but after the order of

Melchisedec? That is completely outside Levi. The answer is that perfection is not brought about by the law and therefore not by the Levitical priesthood either. The simple fact that in Psalm 110:4 another Priest is announced at the same time proves that the Old Covenant and the law, including all its religious institutions, can never bring about perfect reconciliation. If it could, there would be no need for another Priest after the order of Melchisedec. That is a far-reaching conclusion, but an inspired one.

Hebrews 7:12
12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.
When a Priest appears after another order, the priesthood after the order of Aaron no longer has validity. But since the Levitical priesthood is based on the Old Covenant, namely the law, that at the same time means that the Old Covenant—and therefore the law—no longer has validity. The appearance of the High Priest of the New Covenant entails the abolition of the former commandment. The abolition of the Old Covenant. That is all the consequence of that one statement in Psalm 110:4. The New Covenant is the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham. Hence you find a direct line from Abraham to Christ and therefore from Melchisedec, after the order of Melchisedec in Genesis 14, to Christ. You find the same thought also in Galatians 3. The inheritance, that is the New Covenant, is not of the law—that is the Old Covenant—but of the promise to Abraham. That is exactly the same reasoning, without incidentally speaking of priesthood. That the priesthood changes does not mean that it is modified, but that it is replaced. And so necessarily the law, namely the Old Covenant, is also replaced.

Hebrews 7:13
13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.
No one from that tribe was ever called to the priesthood, for of course there were those who literally attended at the altar. If there were kings who thought they had to draw the priestly function to themselves, then things always ended badly for those kings. For the priesthood was not for the king and in any case not for the house of Judah.

Hebrews 7:14
14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.
In other words: the Lord Jesus could in His incarnation simply not be a Priest. According to Galatians 4 He came expressly under the Old Covenant and He was of Judah. He could perhaps lay claim to kingship, but in no way to the priesthood. That could not be under the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant had not yet dawned. The Lord Jesus was in no way a Priest in the days of His flesh. And since the Old Covenant was officially ended, and moreover also fulfilled in His death, this means that He could not be a Priest up to His death, let alone a High Priest. He

therefore became High Priest at the earliest at His resurrection from the dead, and that is precisely what is brought forward in this epistle.
If you want to continue using biblical terminology, you can never think of the Lord Jesus as the crucified One and at the same time as the Priest, for He was not that then. He is now the High Priest of the New Covenant. But to become that He first had to end the Old Covenant, and that happened in His death. If He wanted to become Priest, it was necessary for Him first to die and so abolish the Old Covenant and therefore the law. By the ending of the Old Covenant space was created for the establishment of the New Covenant. And of that New Covenant He is the Firstborn, therefore the King and therefore the High Priest. Before His resurrection He was no Priest, for He was not of Levi.

Hebrews 7:15
15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,
For another Priest arose. Not after the likeness of Aaron, but One after the likeness of Melchisedec, who according to the description in Hebrews 7:3 became like the Son of God. The Lord Jesus was appointed Son in His resurrection and He fully corresponds to the description given here of Melchisedec. He is another Priest, for He does not resemble Aaron, but Melchisedec.

Hebrews 7:16
16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.
He did not become High Priest after the law, but after the power of an endless life. Under the law the priesthood of Aaron was instituted, but one became it on the ground of the flesh: the law of a carnal commandment. And the flesh is mortal. Christ became High Priest after the power of an endless life. The priests of the Old Covenant became priests by birth and under the law. They became it by force of the law; they became it by force of their life. By birth, namely. Every man who descended from Aaron was by definition a priest. Whether there was a vacancy or not had nothing to do with it. He simply became it because he was born as such. By force of his life, for he had the life of Aaron in him and on that ground he was a priest. That is how it was regulated in the law. One is therefore in fact born a priest. But someone who is born is of course not yet a priest in practice. Someone is born to be a priest. As soon as he is born, he is destined for the priesthood. He is that by force of his carnal, his perishable life. That is not stated explicitly, but when the comparison with Christ is drawn, it is said that He became it by force of His endless life. Therefore they also were prevented by death from continuing for ever. But Christ is High Priest after the power of an endless life. Therefore also on the ground of birth. For birth is the process by which one receives life. And by birth the priests of the Old Covenant were priests. The Lord Jesus also became High Priest by birth. Of course not by His incarnation, for then He was of Judah and not of Levi. And therefore according to the law no priest. But He became

Priest on the ground of His new birth. Nevertheless by birth, by force of the life He received. The endless life with which He rose from the dead.

Hebrews 7:17
17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.
The apostle again quotes Psalm 110:4. But the emphasis now falls on “for ever.” It concerns the endless life. Thereby the term “for ever” is at once explained. It means “incorruptible.” There is no end to it.

Hebrews 7:18
18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.
The commandment going before is the law of the Old Covenant. “Disannulling” does not mean that it no longer exists afterwards, but that it no longer works. The law has served its purpose. The Lord Jesus said on one occasion: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law,” while on another occasion He does speak of destroying the law. The Lord Jesus came to fulfil the law. And when the law is fulfilled, it is destroyed. The law reached its goal in the death of the Lord Jesus. Thereby the law no longer has effect. When the whole human race has died because One died for all, then that whole human race is free from the law, for the law is intended only for the living. That is the short biblical reasoning. The Lord Jesus has through death set the whole human race free from the law. Thereby you are not yet saved, but you are delivered from the law. Moreover, the law is weak and unprofitable. Not because there is anything wrong with the law, for the law is holy, just, and good (Romans 7), but the law was laid upon the flesh, and since the flesh is weak, the law is also weak. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The weak link in the law is man, who receives the law as a burden on his shoulders and cannot bear it.

Hebrews 7:19
19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.
This connects with verse 11, where it concerns the imperfection of the law. The law is an introduction to a better hope, a shadow of good things to come (Hebrews 10:1). The law is a picture of the New Covenant. The law as such does not even contribute to the coming of the New Covenant, for that comes from the promises to Abraham. The law is therefore an illustration of the New Covenant, just as the Aaronic priesthood is an illustration of the Melchisedec priesthood. The law seems to give hope, but the New Covenant has a better hope. Hebrews speaks of fourteen “better” things. Everything to do with the priesthood is marked by the number fourteen. “Drawing nigh unto God” is in fact a description of offering under the Old Covenant. “Coming boldly” or “drawing nigh” or “approaching” God is all a translation of the Hebrew word “korban,” which is normally translated “offering.” Offering is therefore the same as drawing nigh to God. When we draw nigh to God, we present ourselves to God. We offer ourselves to God.

Hebrews 7:20–21
20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest:
21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)
Here again the New Testament priesthood is set above that of Aaron.

Hebrews 7:22
22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.
It was a better hope and therefore also a better covenant. There are better offerings and there is a better High Priest. “Surety” means that the New Covenant is secured in the Person of Jesus Christ. I say Person, but I really mean His being. That New Covenant is secured in the being of the Lord Jesus Christ. And who He is is not for nothing mentioned in Hebrews 1:3. Seated at the right hand of God and supremely exalted, far above the angels. The brightness of God’s glory and the express image of His person, and the Representative of the Word of God. He is the Mediator, the Surety of the New Covenant.

Hebrews 7:23–24
23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:
24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.
Someone might still say that the Old Testament priesthood was much greater, because under the Old Covenant there were many high priests, while under the New Covenant there is only One. It therefore seems that the Old Testament one was much heavier, stronger, and better. But the fact that there were so many high priests under the Old Covenant was because they were prevented by death from continuing for ever. That was precisely because of their weakness, because of the death that worked in them. That there is only One High Priest under the New Covenant is precisely the proof of the power of His endless life. “Unchangeable” does not only mean that there is no end to it, just as “for ever” often means more than that there is no end to it.

Hebrews 7:25
25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.
“For ever” does not only mean “ever-continuing,” for when there are no limiting expressions, it also means “all-encompassing.” As great, as strong, as wide, and as long in time as is in any way possible. Therefore it says that He is able to save to the uttermost. It is an all-encompassing priesthood. “Come unto God” is again the same as “offering.” The thought is that the priests of the Old Covenant drew nigh to God and offered through the function of the high priest and under the responsibility of the high priest. So it is under the New Covenant also. We are placed under the supervision and responsibility of the High Priest of the New Covenant.

Thus we draw nigh to God through the High Priest. We do not merely go to Him, but we also offer.

Hebrews 7:26
26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;
Whom does this concern now? The One who suffered and died, or the One who rose from the dead? In His suffering and death He was not holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, for He was numbered with the transgressors (Isaiah 53). Therefore He also died. It of course concerns the One who was raised. He has been made higher than the heavens.

Hebrews 7:27
27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.
With this I simply mean that "once" in the first place refers to "not daily." The high priests of the Old Covenant did it daily (every Day of Atonement). But Christ did it once. The Old Testament high priest did it first for his own sins and then for those of the people, but Christ did it once. There is no question of two offerings, one for Himself and one for the sins of the people, but once. Not daily and not even twice. He did it once, when He offered up Himself. Here therefore is what the High Priest did. For the thought was after all that of chapter 5.

Hebrews 5:1
1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:
This High Priest of the New Covenant is ordained in the things pertaining to God. He did not need to offer multiple gifts and sacrifices, but He brought one offering and that was sufficient. That one offering was Himself. As far as I am concerned, "offering up" means "offering upwards." Towards God, upwards. And of course that was complete. He gave Himself entirely to God.

Hebrews 7:28
28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.
"For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity." But the word of the oath, which came after the law, maketh the Son. That Son is consecrated for evermore. He was consecrated through His suffering and death. It was necessary that this Man should be consecrated and made perfect, so that He might be the cause of eternal salvation to those who believe in Him. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant.

Hebrews 5:2
2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity;
These words in Hebrews 5 of course apply in the first place to the Old Testament priests. That is also confirmed in Hebrews 7.

Hebrews 7:28a
28a For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; …Then it says that the word of the oath maketh the Son.

Hebrews 7:28b
28b … but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.
It is then suggested that the Son has no infirmity, but then we are back to the same discussion. The Lord Jesus was at any rate man and He had infirmity because He had to and would die. But in Hebrews 5:2 it is not so much about the fact that He had to and would die, but that He could have fitting compassion because He Himself also had to find His own way, or seek it, and because He Himself could also suffer. And He did that. He learned obedience from the things He suffered. Now He no longer needs to. He is no longer ignorant and going astray; who must find His way and be taught in the Word and come to glory through suffering. He has already come to glory. But the ability to enter into the human condition He still has.
This Epistle to the Hebrews explicitly teaches that the man Jesus was appointed Son of God, but He is man in heaven. It is the Son of man who has received a position in heaven, for the High Priest is taken from among men. That human ability, or inability—for I never know whether I use the right words—those human characteristics He still has, as long as you do not interpret that as sinful characteristics. “Having a weakness for” is loving someone, and that can be regarded as a weakness or shortcoming. The weakness of the Lord Jesus is that He is first of all able to love; to be moved with inward compassion; who can sympathise with us; can feel with the ignorant and those who go astray, while on the other hand He is indeed perfect. If as a man you are able to enter into other people’s situations and your own personality is not affected, then as far as I am concerned you are a perfect man.
The first rule for a counsellor is also that they must never become involved in the lives of their clients. But if they do not become involved, they cannot help. It is therefore always a matter of compromise. On the one hand entering in and on the other hand yet remaining standing oneself. That is a terribly difficult matter. We find that perfect ideal in the Lord. And that is a comforting thought. A Lord who is not defiled or humiliated by us, and with whom we can yet come with all our shortcomings.

Hebrews 8:1
1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in

the heavens;It is summarised again, for the writer of the epistle evidently also assumes that discussion will arise about the statements that have been made before. He therefore summarises what has gone before and says that it is about the fact that we have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. Verse 2 says the same.

Hebrews 8:2
2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.
He is a minister of the sanctuary, namely the true tabernacle. Not of the tabernacle of Moses, which was pitched by men, but of the tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Hebrews 8:3
3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.
That was already stated in chapter 5:1 and also in a few verses before this. He offered up Himself in the function of High Priest (Hebrews 7:27–28). What would this High Priest offer? Himself. But what is that then? The apostle does not yet go into it. He does already mention it. Just read on:

Hebrews 8:4
4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:
This verse connects with verses 1 and 2, namely that He is High Priest in heaven. He does not offer gifts according to the law, for He is not under the law. About that law and the offerings of that law it then says:

Hebrews 8:5a
5a Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, …They serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, for the law is the introduction to that better hope. The law is the shadow of good things to come (Hebrews 10:1). The offerings, as they were brought by the Old Testament priests, were part of the shadow and therefore had no other function than to be a picture of what would one day, later under the New Covenant and especially in heaven, be established. Nothing more.

Hebrews 8:5b
5b … as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.
“Pattern” is actually not quite the right word. It should have been “example.” Moses had seen the heavenly things on the mountain. He had to portray or represent the heavenly things in the earthly tabernacle and the earthly worship under the law. They are therefore representations of the real things, of the true tabernacle. Christ forms part of that. The institution of Aaron as the first high priest of the Old Covenant is a

representation of the priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchisedec. And that latter has become reality since the resurrection of Christ.
A type is not by definition a representation of something higher. The higher thing, which is portrayed downwards, is also called a “type” in the Bible. One is a type of the other, and the other is a type of the one. You can say that the tabernacle was a type of the heavenly things that Moses saw, but here it is the other way round. The heavenly things are a type, an example, of the things that were to be made on earth. Moses saw these New Testament things and in some way gained insight into the New Testament high priesthood of Christ. That is also the reason why Moses ultimately shares in it.

Hebrews 8:6
6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.
He is the Mediator of a better, namely a New, Covenant. That Covenant is established upon better promises. We too have received better promises under the New Covenant. That is later also explained in chapter 11. Under the Old Covenant promises were made of an earthly homeland, but under the New Covenant promises are made of a heavenly homeland. In Hebrews 12 it is then said that we have a share in Jerusalem, but not the Jerusalem on earth, but the Jerusalem in heaven. And Christ is the Mediator, the Surety, the High Priest of that New Covenant.

Hebrews 8:7
7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.
That is the same as: “If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood….”

Hebrews 8:8–12
8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:
9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.
10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:
11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.
12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

In Psalm 110 another High Priest is announced, namely One after the order of Melchisedec, and therefore a new and better covenant and a new and better priesthood come. Now the same reasoning comes, but not from Psalm 110, but from Jeremiah 31. There indeed the High Priest is not mentioned, but the New Covenant is. Incidentally, in Isaiah also the New Covenant, the Covenant of Peace, is spoken of many times. Nevertheless, here still no mention is made of that High Priest, and certainly not of the offerings. The conclusion then follows in verse 13:

Hebrews 8:13
13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.
When the Lord speaks in Jeremiah 31:31 of a New Covenant, He has thereby made the first covenant old. As soon as a New Covenant is spoken of, the present covenant becomes “the Old Covenant.” The law is therefore already called “the Old Covenant” since Jeremiah 31, for there a New Covenant is spoken of, to replace the Old. The readers of the epistle should therefore already have been familiar for hundreds of years with the thought that the Old Covenant would be ended and that a New Covenant would come. Since the days of Jeremiah that Old Covenant should therefore no longer have played such an important role among the people. But the peculiar thing is that it was only after Jeremiah that Judaism—and with it the heavy life under the law—arose. It therefore did not cease, but was made stronger and developed. That is exactly the opposite of God’s will. That is the drift of this passage of Scripture.

- The Perfect Offering of Christ

Hebrews 9:1
1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.
That means that the first covenant had religious institutions. The Old Covenant indeed had ordinances of service. Those institutions were based on and related to the worldly sanctuary. The sanctuary in the world, in distinction from the third heaven.

Hebrews 9:2
2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.
The first tabernacle was therefore the sanctuary. The tabernacle consisted of two parts, but in this passage of Scripture the two parts are designated as separate tabernacles: the first and the second.

Hebrews 9:3
3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;The second veil we usually simply call the veil, just as Hebrews 10 does. The first veil is the curtain, known as the door. The gate is the entrance to the court, the door is the curtain at the entrance to the

sanctuary, and the veil is the entrance to the Holiest of all, or the second tabernacle.

Hebrews 9:4
4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;
This usually causes misunderstandings. The Bible says explicitly in other places that in the ark of the covenant, in the chest therefore, there was never anything but those two stone tables. In Greek the meaning of “in” is much broader than in English or Hebrew. In practice it was that all these objects belonged to the ark, but that only the stone tables really lay in the ark under the mercy seat. The other objects stood before it. “In” therefore means here that those objects belonged together.

Hebrews 9:5
5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.
By the phrase “cherubims of glory” it is immediately said what those cherubim represent. For they portray the glory of Christ. The writer wants to say nothing about all these things now, but that means that all these things do indeed have their meaning and there would be much to say about them. They speak of Christ and of the New Covenant, although they belonged to the Old Testament institutions.

Hebrews 9:6
6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.
There was one exception to “always.” For although service was performed every day in the sanctuary, there was one day in the year on which no service was performed and even might not be performed. For the simple reason that on that day service was performed in the second tabernacle by the high priest. Thereby it is indicated that the service of the high priest on the Day of Atonement is a picture of the service of Christ under the New Covenant. And when this High Priest performs service, the service in the first tabernacle, in the sanctuary therefore, is stopped. That is also explicitly stated in
Leviticus 16:17
17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.
Thereby it is indicated that when the service under the New Covenant dawns, the service under the Old Covenant is stopped.

Hebrews 9:7
7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

What did he offer? Blood. And where did he bring it? Note! He did not offer animals, but blood. Of course animals were first slain, but their blood was offered in the sanctuary. Those animals were slain. That is therefore not called offering, but slaying. The blood of those animals did not come on the altar, but ultimately on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant therefore functions on that occasion as an altar. Therefore it can be said that the high priest offered the blood. In the next part of the chapter it is explained that the ark in the Holiest of all is a picture of the throne of grace, of the throne of the exalted Christ under the New Covenant, and that throne stands in heaven.

- Blood Is Life

The first tabernacle is a picture of the Old Covenant and of earthly things, and the second tabernacle is a picture of the New Covenant and at the same time also of heavenly things. The mercy seat, of which the LORD had said that He would speak to the people from there, is a picture of the throne of grace of Hebrews 4. In English the mercy seat is also not called the mercy seat, but the “Mercy seat,” the seat of grace. The blood, namely the life of the animals that had previously died, was offered in the sanctuary itself. Where then was the life of Christ offered; the life of the One who had previously died? That life was brought into the sanctuary. His old man—and I say nothing improper by that—did not go to heaven, but to the realm of the dead. He only went to heaven when He rose from the dead. The resurrection of Christ from the dead corresponds to the entering of the high priest with blood into the Holiest of all, that is, into heaven itself. And in His entering into heaven, in His supreme exaltation, He offered up His own life.
The high priest offered the blood for himself and for the errors of the people. He represented not only the people, but he was also one with the people. That blood is therefore regarded as one. Christ, our High Priest, is one with His people. His life is therefore our life, and where He offers up His life and in particular His Body and brings it into heaven and presents it to God, there He also offers us, for we are His people and have a share in Him. “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Therefore one offering; for Himself and for His people.

Hebrews 9:8
8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:
It is clear that the Holy Ghost speaks here. The thought is that the work of the high priest from verse 7 could only be done on that particular date and occasion, whereby the service in the sanctuary was stopped.
Hebrews 9:9
9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;
Perhaps they could be sanctified outwardly, but not inwardly, to the heart. Here therefore it says that the first tabernacle was a figure of the Old

Covenant. As long as the service in the first tabernacle continued, the Old Covenant continued. Typologically speaking, that is. And when on the Day of Atonement service was performed in the second tabernacle, the service in the first tabernacle was stopped. Thereby, according to the Holy Ghost, it is indicated that as long as the Old Covenant stands, the New Covenant does not dawn. That does not only depend on a certain date, but it goes much further. It may be that the Old Covenant stood until the death of the Lord Jesus, after which at His resurrection the New Covenant dawned, but the more practical side of the story is that where we live under the Old Covenant and under the law, it is impossible to know Christ as the High Priest of the New Covenant. We then do not even know the New Covenant. For that cannot function as long as the Old Covenant still stands. Therefore at the end of the epistle you also get the call:

Hebrews 13:13–14
13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.
14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Going out outside Jerusalem and more particularly outside Judaism and outside the law, for under the law and in the camp the New Covenant does not work. I assure you that where one lives under the law—in whatever way, in a Jewish or Christian way—one does not know Christ as the High Priest of the New Covenant. I do not say that one does not know Christ then, but one does not know Him then in His present function. In Galatians it says that Christ has become of no effect to you. “Ye are fallen from grace.” It is either one or the other. As long as service is performed in the sanctuary, no service can be performed in the Holiest of all. And when service is performed in the Holiest of all, the service in the sanctuary must stop. The ignorance of the high priesthood of Christ, in practice, is caused by continuing to live under the Old Covenant. All the New Testament epistles deal with that theme. If you hold to the old, you will never be able to cast even a glance behind the veil. Ignorance of this matter moreover means that one then also cannot really know what Christ now does for you and me. And if we do not know what He does for us, we cannot trust in it either and therefore cannot live from it.

The discussion and difficulties we encounter along the way are not of a theoretical nature, but have to do with our disposition, with our heart. It goes much deeper than merely the question whether He is or is not High Priest and whether He did or did not bring an offering and what that offering consists of. It is about our practical life! And that practical life for the Lord cannot exist if one does not first know the practical service of the Lord Himself. We cannot know that if we only know the service in the sanctuary. You may well say that the service in the sanctuary was instituted by God and that the law is righteous, holy, and good, but the Bible says that the law is weak and unprofitable and abolished by the death of the Lord Jesus. Therefore we are called to place ourselves under the service of the New Covenant. But that can only be if you know what that entails. And if you then ask what that entails, I say: that it means that an offering is brought. What offering then? That we let ourselves be killed

as martyrs or something similar? That is not practical service, but the end of practical service. It is precisely about that living, holy, and acceptable offering to God. In that the Lord has gone before us. Therefore what is said in chapter 10 is so poorly understood.

- The Body of Christ

Hebrews 10:5, 9
5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:
9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.
Who came into the world? That is Christ, the High Priest of the New Covenant. He did not come into the world around Christmas, but around Easter. There He appeared and in that position He said: “Lo, I come to do thy will.” And in that will we are sanctified. In that position He said: “Lo, I come to do thy will, and a body hast thou prepared me.” That is the body of which a few verses further it says:

Hebrews 10:10
10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
We are sanctified in that will and in that offering. What then is that body that was prepared for Him when He came into the world? Not the body that was born in Bethlehem. It concerns the New Testament body (the mystical body) of Christ, of which we have become members. That is the body He offered to God, moreover according to God’s will, and in that will and in that offering we are sanctified. We are therefore among other things that offering. So that not only He, but also we, through new birth have become priests of the New Covenant. And the call at the end of the epistle to draw nigh to Him, to place ourselves under Him, to believe in Him, to go out to Him outside the camp, is a call to us so that we too might indeed take upon ourselves our priestly responsibilities. For we are priests by force of endless life, which we have received through our new birth in Christ and with Christ. It is therefore a particularly practical matter, and that makes it worth delving into, but on the other hand that is also the reason why this theme is so unknown. For anyone who understands it, it has without question a practical effect in the service to God. Where our salvation and our new birth are secured, the adversary will do everything to make us unfit in our days of flesh to serve the living God, so that we do not walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are indeed called.
This theme should precisely motivate us to very consciously and in all boldness place our lives in the service of God and serve Him with all that is in us. That is the consequence of this truth. We are His Body and He has offered that and thereby placed us in this responsible position. We are therefore made able to be servants of God. But what it is about here is whether we are also faithful as servants.

Hebrews 9:10
10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.It all had to do with outward things. They were ordinances that could not cleanse the inner man, the heart. These matters were imposed upon them until the time of reformation. Until the time of the New Covenant. That better time, that better covenant, and moreover the better High Priest of that better covenant, are mentioned from verse 11 onwards.

Hebrews 9:11–12
11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;
12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.
On what occasion did He come? Naturally at the resurrection. I always think of this Old Testament statement: “Unto us a child is born (Christmas), unto us a son is given (that is undoubtedly Easter), and the government shall be upon his shoulder” (that is the consequence of His being Son). For the Son is the One who receives the Kingdom. If you read verses 11 and 12 carefully, the following is stated:

Hebrews 9:11a, 12b
11a But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come…
12b … he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.
In the intervening sentences it says that He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle. He entered into the better tabernacle. And that tabernacle is not made with hands. It therefore does not actually belong to this creation. When “building” is spoken of, it concerns creation. Christ entered a tabernacle that is not part of this creation, for this tabernacle is part of the new creation. That is not all that can be said, for it is explained further later. It is clear, on the basis of what has already been told, that Christ entered into the New Covenant. For the Holiest of all was after all a picture of the New Covenant. Christ did not enter into the picture, into the example, but into the true sanctuary.
He also did not enter by the blood of goats and calves. The high priest of the Old Covenant did do that. He offered that blood and sprinkled it before and upon the mercy seat. But Christ entered by His own blood. Although it is not stated explicitly here, this means that He offered His own blood after His resurrection. That blood did not end up in death, but in the New Covenant. That is a term we encounter many times in the New Testament: the blood of the New Testament. You can also say that this blood ended up in heaven. The thought is that not only the Holiest of all is a picture of the New Covenant, but applied to our dispensation, it is at the same time a picture of heaven itself. They are described one after the other in this chapter. Christ naturally offered that blood for Himself and for the errors of His people, for that is the expression in verse 7, in connection with the Old Covenant. Thereby He obtained eternal redemption. Then in verses 13

and 14 the same story comes back once more. Namely, the comparison between the blood of the Old Covenant, possibly in particular the blood of bulls and goats on the Day of Atonement, and the blood of Christ.

Hebrews 9:13–14
13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:
14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
The blood of bulls and goats cleansed them to an outward purity, but that is actually only a ritual purity. “The ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean” is an expression from Numbers 19, which has nothing to do with the Day of Atonement, but which does indeed have a similar meaning. There too there is an animal, namely the red heifer. It is slain, its blood is caught, and the ashes of the burnt heifer are mixed with running water and kept outside the camp of Israel, in the wilderness. If someone had become unclean through contact with death, that person had to go out of the camp to be sprinkled there with that ash and water to be cleansed thereby. To be cleansed, one therefore had to go out outside the camp, on the ground of an event that happened once. The whole story concerns only one red heifer. It is a ritual that was performed only once and never again. That in fact expresses exactly the same as what is expressed here in Hebrews 9: the once-for-all work of Christ, whereby we are cleansed. And the thought in Hebrews is therefore that we should go out outside the camp. In practice and in the context of the Epistle to the Hebrews this means that one should precisely go out outside Judaism and outside the Old Covenant and therefore outside the law. Outside it one is cleansed. As long as one remains in the camp, and therefore lives under the law, one is not cleansed, one cannot be a minister of the New Covenant and of the living God. The meaning of the events on the Day of Atonement and the meaning of the offering of the red heifer are in fact the same. We are cleansed by a once-for-all offering, provided at least that we go out to the place of reconciliation. We go out because of the ashes of that heifer, or we enter the sanctuary and draw nigh to the ark of the covenant, the throne of grace, to receive reconciliation there.

- The Two Goats

On the Day of Atonement there is not only the blood of goats and calves. On every Day of Atonement there is at any rate the matter of two goats that belong together. One goat is killed and its blood is brought into the sanctuary (that is spoken of here), while the other goat is driven into the wilderness, outside the camp. I am aware that it is usually said that that goat must have died outside the camp and in the wilderness, for after all that beast cannot live there. Of course that goat died. All the goats that were not slain also died over the years. That is self-evident. But if it is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, it cannot possibly have scriptural meaning. What matters is that one goat was killed and that its blood, its life, was offered in the sanctuary on the mercy seat. The other goat was

driven out into the wilderness outside the camp. That goat was therefore not killed, but lived on. Not in the camp, but outside it. The thought is that those two goats together are one offering; they belong together. From an outward point of view the goat driven outside the camp lives on in the wilderness, and from the other point of view the goat lives on in the sanctuary. The goat driven outside is a picture of you and me, who live here on earth. Not in the camp and not in Judaism and not with the citizenship of Israel according to earthly customs. Officially we do not even belong to society, but live in the wilderness and are on our way to the promised land.
Now the sins were indeed laid on that goat, but do we not also bear those sins? Are we not also sinners? “For if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” But the other side of the story is that we have received life and our life is in the sanctuary. It is in the true sanctuary, in the innermost part of the sanctuary, in heaven itself. Before the throne of God, or rather the throne of Christ. Both things are true, and both things are discussed at length in the New Testament epistles. Not only in the Epistle to the Hebrews; only the Epistle to the Hebrews draws it from these Old Testament types. On the one hand we therefore live in the wilderness, outside the camp, still on earth and still as sinners. That is horizontal and earthly reasoning. We are condemned criminals. The other side of the story is that we are seated with Christ in heaven. And because that is, I think, difficult to portray with one goat, it is therefore portrayed with two goats. Christ too went outside the camp, for we are called to go out to Him outside the camp. He died outside Jerusalem. That is a picture of the present dispensation. Israel is without Christ, without Messiah, without Prince, without God, without teraphim, without graven image—in short, without Christ. Where then is the Lord? In any case not among the Jewish people as such. If He does His work on earth, then it is in any case outside it. And we therefore go outside, to Him.In the days of Acts you also find that history again. There you find the first believers, the first Christian communities in Jerusalem, but the biblical history does after all end with the destruction of Jerusalem. That rich, great church of Jerusalem was completely impoverished at the end and ultimately ceased to exist. And if one had not gone out, then one found death there, as literally as possible. Hence many believe that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem. The Lord was crucified outside Jerusalem, and outside it He also ascended to heaven. He is also not in this world, this society, for His own received Him not and the world knew Him not. He was therefore rejected. He is in you and me and in the Church. And if you say that the Church is on earth, that is true, but in any case not among the nations as such. And if you say that the Church is in heaven, that is also true, for that is where Christ is. Both are true. We should learn to understand that. That we are citizens of heaven and that our life is hid with Christ in God. That stands in Colossians 3, and there it also says that Christ is in heaven.
Colossians 3:1–3
1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
Are we now dead or do we live? Our life is hid with Christ in God. In any case in heaven. There is our life and there is our blood. As regards the horizontal circumstances, we are outside the camp. If all is well, at least. For that is one of the drifts of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Not to remain in the sanctuary, but to go out to Him outside the camp, or rather to go out of the sanctuary and into the Holiest of all.Hebrews 9:13–14
13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:
14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?We can also read Hebrews 9:13–14 as:

Hebrews 9:13–14
13 For if the blood of bulls and goats sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh;
14 How much more shall the blood of Christ sanctify us to spiritual purity?
That is not literally what it says, but that is what it means. That is at any rate the thought. It is only worded a little differently in verse 14, and moreover something is added. “How much more shall the blood of Christ…” that is the life of Christ in His resurrection. It concerns the blood that was offered by the High Priest. Christ became High Priest in His resurrection. He offered His own blood, therefore His own life. It concerns the living Christ now. That it concerns His resurrection life must be clear from the words that are now added at length. “… who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.” If you leave out that whole clause, the parallel with verse 13 becomes simpler. Then it says: “How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works.” That whole intervening clause is added as commentary on the blood of Christ. Eternity comes after the resurrection and even through the resurrection. The eternal Spirit obviously speaks of the Spirit that will not be taken away. That is the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Spirit of the New Covenant and the Spirit of promise, Christ, through the eternal Spirit offered Himself. That the High Priest offers Himself is portrayed by the offering of His blood, and that blood stands for His own life, His own being. Perhaps not so much His outward appearance, but certainly His being. That is much more important. He offered Himself to God. Moreover, He offered Himself without spot to God. That means He was perfect. And since when is He perfect? That is of course a very difficult question. There are people who say that if you put it that way, it causes problems. But then you have to skip whole passages of Scripture. But how without spot? For the simple reason that when the Lord Jesus died, He bore the penalty. And if He bore the penalty according to justice, then He was in any case not without spot at that moment. Those are biblical facts. “The chastisement of our peace was upon him.” That was at any rate when He suffered and died. So when an offering of Christ is spoken of while He is without spot, in this case too it cannot refer to His crucifixion. He became

without spot and perfect in His resurrection from the dead. After He had by Himself purged our sins (Hebrews 1:3).

Hebrews 5:9
9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
This too, of course, refers to His resurrection from the dead. There He appeared without spot. Before that He bore our penalty and was therefore not without spot. The point is precisely that that penalty was borne and taken away. And since He is without spot, and on that ground, He offered Himself up. “Offering up” practically means: offering to God, upwards. The Oxford dictionary gives five meanings for the word to offer. Not once does it refer to death. In every case it concerns presenting something, usually in a ritual manner, to the Deity, or a deity. Or putting money in a collection plate. It seems that at Roman Catholic funerals people go up to offer. Then they kiss the plate and throw money into the collection plate. That happens at a funeral, but the deceased naturally has nothing to do with it.
Christ offered Himself up and thereby His blood will cleanse our consciences, our hearts, from dead works, to serve the living God. In general we learn that by nature we are an old creation and that in that old creation death and law reign. But on the other hand we learn that there is a new creation and therefore also eternal life, and that there, instead of the law, grace reigns. An evangelical Christian knows that he or she has passed from death into life. We have passed from an old creation to a new creation and from the law into grace. That passage we call the reconciling work of Christ. That comes about through new birth. The death of the old man and the establishment of the new life. We have died, been buried, and been raised with Christ. That process is called new birth, but it is also called reconciliation. But then as the translation of the Greek word “katalasso,” or “apo katalasso.” The point is that this “katalasso,” this reconciliation, is not the work of the high priest. It was indeed the work of the Lord Jesus, but not in His function as High Priest. What then is the function of the High Priest? The high priest of the Old Covenant was not the man who ensured that a Gentile was added to Israel. His task was not to expand that Old Testament people or anything like that. Just as little is it the task of the High Priest of the New Covenant to bring people under that New Covenant; to deliver them from the old and bring them under the new.
At the head of the Old Covenant stood indeed a high priest, originally Aaron. Unfortunately he was prevented by death from continuing for ever. So he was succeeded from time to time. His function was not to bring people from outside under the law, but he was the head, the responsible one, for the practical service under the Old Covenant. He was therefore responsible for those who were within. So it is also with the function of the New Testament High Priest. The High Priest of the New Covenant is indeed the same as the One who brought about “katalasso,” therefore new birth and reconciliation. He delivers people from the Old Covenant and places them in the New Covenant, but that is a different function of Christ. The

High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, in His function as High Priest, is not the One who brings about new birth. He did do that, but He did it before He became High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. The High Priest is the Responsible One, the Head, the Shepherd, the Overseer, the Elder, the Firstborn. He is responsible for those who have a share in the New Covenant, so that they may perform their practical service. As under the Old Covenant one was expected to serve God, so we who have been placed under the New Covenant through our new birth are expected to serve the living God and to be directed towards God. Everything we do that is directed towards God comes to the High Priest, for He is responsible for it. We serve God through, or in, or under Christ, the High Priest of the New Covenant.

The function of “katalasso” is different from that of the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. That function is incidentally also called “reconciliation” in English, but the Greek has a different word for it, namely “hylasmos.” Both terms are translated
to reconcile, because we have no better English words for them. There is of course great agreement between the two words. In both meanings it concerns establishing a connection. With “katalasso” between old and new creation, but with “hylasmos” it concerns the connection of those who live in that new creation and their God, whom they serve. Thus the function of Aaron, who made reconciliation for the sins of the people, is also described with this word “hylasmos.” The mercy seat is therefore called “hylasterion”: the place of reconciliation. God presented Christ, not as a propitiation, but as the place of reconciliation. Therefore we draw nigh to that place. Where He is, there is the place of reconciliation. He is on the mercy seat, or rather the throne of grace, and there therefore is the place of reconciliation. That is the place of our assembling together from Hebrews 10:25. That is the place where we serve God, since we have passed from an old to a new creation.

If it were true that we are reconciled to God through the death of the high priest, then Aaron would have had to die to reconcile the people, but precisely that he must not do. The Old Testament high priests were prevented by death from continuing, but that was not the intention. We must therefore keep these two functions clearly distinct. And here in Hebrews 9 it concerns the function of the High Priest who is responsible for our service and who also makes us fit to serve God. For we are sinners and He reconciles our sins, even though we live under the New Covenant. God sees us in Christ. We have become one with Christ, who is our Head. He is the Head of the Body and we have a share in His blessings. When we draw nigh to God, we do not go further than to Christ, and God sees us in Christ and He is perfect and therefore we are perfect. That means that He as it were covers our sins. In His function at the top He is the “filter” through which we draw nigh to God. Therefore God sees us in Christ and we are perfect. We are not perfect if we consider everything objectively, but in Christ we are. Although we dwell in a sinful body, God sees us in Christ and in Christ we serve God. When we want to serve God, we must be aware that we are not sinners before God. For we have this High Priest. God has given the responsibility for the service to Him to the Lord Jesus

Christ, who also made Himself available for it, for He offered Himself. God thereby appointed Him and has given all things into His hands, and in Him we have a share in that. It does not go around it. We must therefore consider that we are perfect before God and therefore have no excuse at all not to serve Him in the practice of our life. You can never say that you were so weak and a sinner. That does not hold at all. But that will at the same time be the reason why the function of the High Priest is also so little known. For if one is aware of that function, one no longer has any excuse.

- The Cleansing of Our Conscience

“How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” It is not the flesh that is cleansed, but our conscience. There are people who think that the Lord cleanses our flesh from dead works. As if to say: “Now we are children of God and now we no longer sin.” And there are those who believe that they no longer sin at all, but that is not stated in Scripture. He does not cleanse our flesh from dead works. He cleanses our consciences. That means that we sin, but the sins we commit do not stand in the way of our service to God. We should therefore not occupy ourselves with fighting our sins, but with serving God. From which it follows at the same time that fighting sins is not the same as serving God. On the contrary, fighting sins is serving man. Christ cleanses our consciences from dead works, so that we need not worry about them. Nevertheless we are still sinners. We then say that we shall happily be rid of those sins in the future. But that is a misunderstanding. We have been born again (“katalasso”) and connected with the living God and are part of the new creation and have eternal life and are perfect in Christ. In Him who is our Head, in Him who is our Shepherd and Overseer and Elder. In short, in Him who is our High Priest of the New Covenant. God therefore does not call us to account if something goes wrong with the service. This is of course purely theoretical, hypothetical, for the responsibility lies with the Lord Jesus Christ.“

To serve the living God” is only a little clause in Hebrews 9:14, for if it were not there, you would not miss it. The comparison with verse 13 was already complete. Nevertheless, by this little clause it is said what all this is for. It remains of course the case that under the Old Covenant carnal purity according to the precepts of the law was necessary to be able to serve the Lord. If one was unclean, one could not participate in the service to Jehovah. We are therefore cleansed so that we might serve the living God.

Not so that we might be born again or receive eternal life, but so that we might live that eternal life in practice.

Romans 6:23

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If you read in this verse that the sinner must after all die, but that God on the other hand may perhaps give eternal life, then this text is completely out of place and lost. It is of course a biblical truth, but the question is why

that verse stands here. In that sense it should stand in Romans 3, or possibly in the first part of Romans 5. But it stands at the end of Romans 6, and that part does not speak of new birth, but of the fact that we have become new creatures and have died, been buried, and been raised again from death with Christ. And that it is the intention that we should present our members as instruments of righteousness. It therefore speaks of the service under the New Covenant. It also speaks at length about the difference between the old and the new. Formerly we were servants of unrighteousness unto unrighteousness: under the law and in the old creation. But now we are servants of righteousness unto holiness. And speaking of these two different positions, it says that the wages of sin is death. That is the result of a life in this old creation. That is the result of being in bondage to sin and unrighteousness. That does not mean that one will die, but that everything one does in this old creation as a servant of sin and unrighteousness hastens death. It has no other effect than death. The more actively one lives in sin, the sooner one will die, just like others incidentally. The more a man sins, the shorter he lives here. He serves only destruction. The activity of sin is the activity of destruction and thereby of death. Our whole life serves death. All our life we are subject to bondage to death (Hebrews 2). We do not only die in the end, but we also serve death. Thereby we strengthen the working of destruction and death. The other side of the story is that through the grace of God we have received eternal life. And the intention is that we should also live that life in practice. We should not only come to life by grace, but also live by grace. It is the grace of God that we can and may live that same eternal life in practice. It concerns practical things here. In practice it is so that sin strengthens the working of death and therefore leads only to death. On the other hand it is so that God has precisely set that eternal life so that we should live that eternal life in practice. If that were not so, then we, if we serve the Lord well, would only receive eternal life at the end.

Romans 6:21–22

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

We do not receive eternal life on the ground of the fruit of our life and therefore on the ground of our works, although it seems to stand that way. If you do not read this in context, then it says that we have been made free from sin and have become servants to God. That then leads to holiness, and if that all goes nicely, the end (purpose) of that is eternal life. But here the point is not that we should receive that eternal life, but that we should live that eternal life in practice. That is after all the purpose of receiving life. What use is your life to you if you do nothing with it? What use then is eternal life to you, still in this mortal body, if you do nothing with it? We have not only received that life by grace, but on the ground of that same grace we can and may also live that same life, and that life indeed bears fruit. That is at least the intention. Instead of serving death in practice, the intention is that life should be served. The

word “life” in verse 23 is actually more a verb than a noun. Grace should reign in our life.
Romans 5:21
21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.
We live from the abundance of God’s grace. The life of this new life is of course a life in the service of God, under the supervision of the Head, the Mediator of the New Covenant. The goal is not that we should get to heaven, but that we should be made fit, even now in the body, to serve the living God. We are therefore cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ from all sin, so that we may then love the brethren. But that stands in 1 John 1. There the same is said, but then in different words, without the images of the high priesthood. That epistle also begins by saying that we have been born again and that in practice we are cleansed by the life of Christ, or rather by the living Christ: “If we have sinned, we have an Advocate with the Father.” The whole epistle further speaks about how we should now serve the Lord. Even though some say that the whole epistle speaks of love. But what is the difference? We should serve God by serving one another and striving to preserve the spiritual unity through the bond of peace. To promote the unity of the Church and so contribute to God’s work in our days, namely the building and edification of the Church. In the Epistle of John that is translated as loving the brethren, or keeping His commandments. Therefore keeping His Word. The one does not go without the other. That is exactly the same truth. There too it says that we are cleansed by the blood of the New Testament, the blood of Christ, so that we might serve the living God.

Hebrews 9:15
15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.
“And therefore He is the Mediator of the New Testament, so that those who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” That is the main clause. That is precisely the description of Melchisedec, the High Priest of the New Covenant. He is the Mediator between God and man. The Mediator of the New Testament. So that those who are called, the believers, or rather those who live under that New Testament, or those who have received the life of the New Covenant, might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. The promise is that of eternal life. Not as a fact in itself, but in the practical sense of the word, namely that one should serve God. That eternal inheritance you could also call the Kingdom. But a kingdom only makes sense if there is practical service. A kingdom is not just a paper thing. It concerns the practical functioning of the whole. And that is obtained under the Mediator of the New Testament. If that Mediator is not there, then those who are called cannot receive the promise of eternal inheritance. That is in fact stated, but then the other way round, in a positive sense. Opposite the eternal inheritance stands the perishable inheritance. The perishable inheritance is the old creation

and the Old Covenant, and that was in any case the situation under the law and under Aaron.
The intervening clause speaks of how one passes from the perishable inheritance to that eternal inheritance. How one passes from the Old Covenant to the New. “That by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament.” The death of the Lord Jesus was necessary to put an end to the perishable inheritance. By His death He puts an end to the Old Covenant and by His resurrection He makes a beginning with the New Covenant. He is therefore also the Firstborn and the Head of that New Covenant. That is set out at length in the following verses.

Hebrews 9:16
16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.
Someone may well make a testament, but as soon as he does so it is necessary that he then dies.

Hebrews 9:17
17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no force at all while the testator liveth.
The testament is confirmed, becomes a fact and actual when the testator has died. As long as he still lives, a testament means nothing. Therefore the death of the Testator had first to come before the New Testament could come into effect. Whatever happens under the New Covenant and whatever offering is brought under that New Covenant, it only comes after the death of the Covenant-Maker. The nice thing is that it then becomes somewhat doubtful what should be understood by these expressions. For there are two possibilities. One thought is that the testament spoken of here, which comes into force after the death of the Testator, would be the Old Covenant. That is the easiest to deduce from the verses that now follow. In my opinion it is otherwise, for the Old Covenant is after all not brought into force by the death of the Testator, but is precisely ended then.
The other line of thought is that this concerns the promised Covenant announced in Jeremiah 31. When Scripture speaks of making a testament, it refers to the announcement of the New Covenant. That testament only comes into force after the death of the Testator. Thus the New Covenant is viewed as a testament, foretold and described in the Old Testament writings. In every case it is clear who that Testator is, for the Maker of the Old Covenant was Jehovah Himself, and the One who had the New Covenant set down in black and white was likewise Jehovah Himself. Therefore, through the death of the Lord an end came to the Old Covenant, yet at the same time the New Covenant could thereafter come into operation and was bound to do so. And that, of course, is precisely what happened.

Hebrews 9:18 (KJV)
18 Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

The thought is that something similar occurred with the Old Covenant also, for the Old Covenant was first announced, and before it was officially brought into practical operation there were various offerings presented. So there too death came first. Death had first to take place, and only afterwards could the offerings be brought and the Old Covenant come into effect. The bulls and goats are not mentioned here, but the blood of those bulls and goats is. Nor does it say that those animals were slain, for that was of course self-evident; rather, it concerns what happened afterwards. After everything connected with the Old Covenant had been sprinkled with blood, only then did the Old Covenant come into operation. Once again, to be clear: naturally those bulls and goats had first to be killed, but it was not through the death of those animals that the Old Covenant came into effect. It came into effect through their blood being sprinkled upon all the objects and all the things connected with the Old Testament service.

Hebrews 9:19–20 (KJV)
19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,
20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.Here, of course, it concerns the blood of the Old Testament. That testament was dedicated by the blood of those slain calves and goats, which was sprinkled upon the book and upon the people themselves.

Hebrews 9:21 (KJV)
21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.
In former times people had scarcely anything else in the house but vessels, and the word has retained that sense. But it is used here naturally also because man himself is regarded as a vessel, whether unto honour or unto dishonour. The thought is that we too have been sprinkled with the blood of Christ.
1 Peter 1:2 (KJV)
2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.
Thus the New Covenant was dedicated in the same manner. It was dedicated with the life of the One who had first died. Normally speaking, the law of inheritance still works in the same way today. The possessions of the deceased pass to the one who carries most of the life of the departed within himself—namely, to the son. And if there are several sons, I will for a moment set the Bible aside and ask: who carries the most life of the Father within Himself? It is the Son who has been most faithful to the Father. He learned obedience through the things which He suffered, and on that ground He was made perfect and appointed Son. “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”
Just as Moses sprinkled the blood of those dead calves and goats upon the tabernacle, the people, the book of the law, and the vessels, and said, “This is the blood of the testament,” so later it was the Prophet like unto

Moses—the One of whom Moses was a type and forerunner—who suffered and died and rose from the dead, and who just before His death said, “This is the blood of the new testament.” That wine is then, figuratively speaking, the blood of Christ. That wine is a figure of the resurrection life of Christ, with which we have been sprinkled, or rather of which we have drunk. We have a share in it. That is also the drift of the Lord’s Supper. The blood is a figure of the life, and the bread is a figure of the Body of Christ—namely, the Church. The blood of the New Testament is therefore a figure of the life of Christ and thereby a figure of the life of the Church, for the Church is His Body. We are one Body; we are all partakers of one bread. We have the same Spirit, for we all drink of the same Spirit. We have been made to drink into one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12) and we drink of the same cup.

Hebrews 9:23 (KJV)
23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.
It was necessary that the Old Testament patterns should be purified, but the heavenly things themselves had to be purified with better sacrifices than these—and therefore with better blood. The thought was, after all, that blood was offered.

Hebrews 9:24 (KJV)
24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;
That is the same thought as in verse 11. In that verse we read that He entered into the New Covenant, but in verse 24 we read that He entered into heaven. Christ now appears in the presence of God for us, just as Aaron on the Day of Atonement appeared in the presence of God for his people.

Hebrews 9:25 (KJV)
25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

Hebrews 9:12 (KJV)
12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.
Compare verse 12 with verse 25. Christ did not enter with the blood of others, but with His own blood.

Hebrews 9:26 (KJV)
26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.
“Now” here means “meanwhile” or “in the meantime.” When Scripture says “thou” or “today,” it means “at this present moment.” Meanwhile He

has once been manifested, in the consummation of the ages, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Not so much to take away sin as such, but rather to take away the effect of sin. We have already read in chapter 7 about putting away—namely, the abolition of the law—and we then established that the law had not completely disappeared, for we still know the law and still have the law, but the law no longer works. The same is said here concerning sin. Sin is still there, but it no longer has any effect. Whereas formerly sin hindered us and made us unfit to serve God, that is no longer the case. Sin is still present, but thanks to this High Priest and thanks to the sacrifice He has brought, sin no longer has that effect, and therefore our consciences have been cleansed from dead works to serve the living God. You will immediately understand that the fact that we have such a High Priest implies that we are sinners. The matter here is still not about reconciliation in the sense of “katalasso,” but about the vertical direction. He has been manifested in His resurrection to take away the effect of sin in the believer and thereby to put away sin. “Put away” is translated in the King James Version as “to make of no effect.” So not to remove the thing itself, but to remove its effect. It is still there, but it can do nothing more. The putting away of sin was accomplished by the sacrifice of Himself, by His having offered His own blood. With great emphasis: this did not take place in His death, but after His death, for His blood is His life and is Himself.

It will be clear that under the Old Covenant that blood could not be sprinkled unless those calves and goats had first died. One cannot bring an offering upon the altar, at least not an animal offering, unless the animal has first died. Moreover, that was not even permitted. So it is also with the Lord Jesus. He could not offer Himself unless He had first died. That arrangement under the Old Covenant was to portray how the New Covenant would come into being. Not the other way round. The arrangement of the Old Covenant was derived from the arrangement of the New Covenant. What Moses saw on the mountain was the New Covenant, and he then arranged the Old Covenant accordingly. The death of the Lord Jesus had to take place—not only to bring the Old Covenant to an end, but to take away the sins of the world. Not only of believers, but of the whole world. That, however, is not part of the New Covenant. It is the preparation for the New Covenant. Indeed, the death of the Lord Jesus was in fact part of the Old Covenant. For He came under the law, to redeem those who were under the law. And subsequently, that we might receive the adoption of sons. But His life on earth, up to and including His death, was a service under the Old Covenant. If His crucifixion were ever called an offering in Scripture, then it would have been an offering under the Old Covenant. Where the old is, the new cannot be. Therefore the old had first to be brought to an end before the new could dawn.

The other line of reasoning was that in the days of the Old Covenant the New Testament was made and moreover already existed (for Moses had already seen it at the beginning of the Old Covenant), but that it only came into force after the death of the Testator. And that is another argument why He had first to die. These arguments confirm what I have continually brought forward: that the suffering and dying upon the cross of

Golgotha do not form part of the New Covenant, but serve as preparation for the New Covenant. We may perhaps understand that these New Testament things cannot take place without death first intervening, but that must not lead us to think that an offering must speak of death. That is not the case, for it speaks of what happens afterwards. Without that death there would naturally be no offering, but strictly speaking the death does not form part of the offering. I do see it as one whole, but that does not mean it cannot be divided into different phases, each indicated by different words. One can even refer to the whole with the word that ultimately points to the high point. That is a perfectly normal linguistic phenomenon. But if the true offering is not there—if it does not come upon the altar and is not accepted by God—then all those preparations may have taken place, but it is not called an offering. For it has not been offered. One may slaughter the animal according to the precepts of the law and one may even lay it upon an altar, but if God does not take it to Himself, it is not an offering.

I do not deny what the Lord Jesus did, and I do not even deny that according to our somewhat loose use of terms we might perhaps use the word “offering” in connection with the whole earthly walk of the Lord Jesus. That might perhaps be possible. But the point is whether that is scriptural usage. If it is not, we should not use it, for it leads to confusion—and it has of course also led to confusion.

In Hebrews we have already encountered the word “offering” several times, and each time it expressly does not refer to death, but to what comes afterwards—and that is also the drift of this portion of Scripture. After the death of the Testator He becomes the Mediator of the New Covenant, for He rose from the dead. Moreover, the matter here concerns the strict distinction. Everything described here deals with His ministry under the New Covenant and not under the Old. One of the best-known themes of the Epistle to the Hebrews is, after all, that we are called to live under the New Covenant. And if we now stretch the concepts found in this epistle because we find that more convenient and because it perhaps causes us fewer problems, and extend them back to cover what happened under the Old Covenant, then where does that leave the statement that we no longer live under the Old but under the New Covenant? We also do not follow the example of Christ after He suffered and died, but after He lives unto the glory of the Father. He did not become High Priest through His death, but through His resurrection. And if He had only died, we would not even be saved and we would not even live under the New Covenant. On the ground of His resurrection we live under the New Covenant and have been made capable of being ministers of the living God. Nor does it concern merely one verse or a chance remark. The same thought is repeated many times here, and questions concerning His death are answered here. That stands in the parenthetical clause of verse 15.

Hebrews 9:15 (KJV)

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under

the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.
His death is here expressly connected with the Old Covenant. If one does not take the word “offering” strictly, then very many Scripture passages simply become incomprehensible. If one then reads that we should present an offering, that would mean that we should die. The offering consists precisely in the fact that we should give our life. Everything we have. Not so that it should be taken from us, but so that it should come to growth and be used by God Himself.
The Lord Jesus entered with His blood, but that blood was the result of His suffering. If He had to bring this offering often, it would mean that, in order to offer, He would have to suffer and die again and again. The one does not go without the other, but only the latter—after His resurrection—is called an offering.

- Judgment and Salvation

Now I come to a difficult portion. In verse 14 we read of serving the living God, and then in verses 27 and 28 we read of judgment, or rather salvation.Hebrews 9:14 (KJV)
14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 9:27–28 (KJV)
27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:
28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.
The thought is that judgment is the result of sin. The wages of sin is death. The result of the working of sin is, after all, judgment. On the other hand, salvation is the result of serving the living God. Man lives and dies, and afterwards comes judgment. So also with Christ something has been appointed, but not negatively as in verse 27, but positively as in verse 28. That verse is rather complicated, because two things stand together. With man it is a downward path. That is a path of dying. He does not do that only at the moment the doctor is present, but he is in fact busy doing it his whole life long. He lives under the working of death and is subject to the bondage of death, and that ultimately leads to his bodily departure. That is the situation under the Old Covenant. It goes from bad to worse. The situation under the New Covenant is the reverse. That is an upward path. That path is called “offering.” For the old man dies and the new man—Christ—offers himself. And that is also what it says: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” Some then exclaim: “Not all sins?” Yes, He died to take away the sins of all, but that is not what is in view here. He was offered to take away the sins of many—namely, of those who draw near with boldness, who do not forsake the assembling together, and who therefore live under the New Covenant. Thus only of those who are born again. Whereas the life of the natural man leads to judgment, the new life

leads to salvation. Not only for Him, but also for those many. The difficulty is that those many are involved in it. Otherwise the verse would have been much simpler: “So Christ was once offered, and shall receive salvation.” Or shall be rewarded. That is also true, for He is also rewarded for His offering, but that is another matter. His reward is the Church. The point is that in this verse the Church is immediately involved, for the simple reason—set out in chapter 10—that His own offering implies that He offered His Body, namely also the Church. For that is one: Himself and His people.

In chapter 10 we read again of the offering He brought—namely Himself—but now with yet another consequence. In the first half of chapter 9 it concerned the New Covenant; in the second half of chapter 9 it concerned heaven; and in the first half of chapter 10 it concerns the Church, which has a share in the offering. But the thought of verses 27 and 28 is that the natural man knows that downward line in his life and ultimately dies, and afterwards will be judged, whereas the new man—Christ—living under the New Covenant, has offered Himself and therefore receives salvation. But more than that: He has offered Himself to take away our sins, so that we should serve the living God, so that we should receive salvation—reward—for our service to the living God. In Romans 5 we find exactly the same line of thought. If you read Romans 5 from verse 15 for the first time, it is also not immediately clear what it says. Those are astonishingly difficult sentences and parenthetical clauses.

Romans 5:15

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

Here offence and free gift are compared with one another. You really ought to stop there, because what follows is the explanation. If you read that comparison as though it were about two identical things, then of course that is nonsense. For an offence is not the same as a free gift. On the contrary, it is an opposition, and even a double one. The one is an act and the other is a gift. The one is work and the other is a present. And the act is wrong, but the free gift is good. That seems clear to me. The sentence begins with “but not.” There is a negation in front of it. That does not mean that the “as—so” does not hold, but because the words “but not” are added, it expressly indicates that it is an opposition. The one is as it were the negation of the other. In this passage it occurs only twice, whereas in fact we get seven comparisons. It is only present in the first two comparisons. The main clause is as follows: “Through the offence of one many have died, and through the free gift of One many receive eternal life.” It concerns the parallel: as the one, so also the other. If for convenience we could momentarily forget the concepts of good and evil, for that is not what it is about here, then we would no longer even say that it concerns an opposition, but an absolute parallel. The same applies to verse 16.

Romans 5:16

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment

was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.
“The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.” This too is again a parallel. The first relates to Adam and the second to Christ. As Adam, so also Christ. As the man, so also Christ, but that is how it stands in Hebrews 9:28.
Romans 5:17
17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.
By one offence death reigned over the living through Adam, but by the abundance of grace the living reign. If you complete the sentence, you get the full picture, namely: reign over death. For we have a share in the victory over death. And that obviously through Christ.
Romans 5:18
18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.
By one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation, by one righteousness the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Condemnation brings death and justification brings life.
Romans 5:19
19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
By the disobedience of Adam many were made sinners, and by the obedience of Christ many are made righteous. Those many sinners are all people minus One. And what then was that disobedience of Adam and what is the obedience of Christ? The unbelief of Adam and the faith of Christ.
Romans 5:20
20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:
Through the law sin abounded, and thereby grace abounded much more. The second sentence is more positive than the first is negative.
Romans 5:21
21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.
Sin has reigned and led to death, and since then grace reigns. Where sin ceases to reign, grace then reigns, and vice versa. So grace would reign unto eternal life. The thought is not merely that sin reigns until death follows, but that sin reigns in the life of man and thereby activates the working of death, the working of destruction. Then it is not the case that grace reigns over us until we finally receive eternal life, but that grace reigns over us so that the eternal life we have received might actually be activated. Now, namely. It is not about dying and receiving eternal life on the other side, but about the working of death in general in the old creation and the working of eternal life in us who have a share in the second Adam. All these comparisons concern the opposition between

Adam and all who are in Adam, as opposed to Christ and all who are in Christ.
1 Corinthians 15:22
22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.
All who are in Adam and thereby have a share in the old human nature die, but all who have a share in Christ shall be made alive. To the body, incidentally, for that is what
1 Corinthians 15 is about.

Hebrews 9:27–28
27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:
28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.
As it is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment; so also Christ once offered, and after that salvation. We have an opposition between the natural man and Christ, and that is also the opposition between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, and we have the opposition between judgment and salvation. Therefore I conclude from this that this, just like in Romans 5, is an opposition, namely between dying and being offered. There is something more. From the preceding verses we have seen that offering has to do with a once-for-all event. That is not an event that happened once and was then finished and therefore perfect past tense. That offering is still there. He offered Himself and that offering is still in force and still has its effect. That is apparently also the case here with dying. Not that a man dies on his deathbed, but that that dying is a description of his whole life. So it stands at least in Hebrews 2:15. There it is said at length that man is subject to death all his life and is therefore busy dying. And you can only be busy dying if you are still alive. Hence dying and living are not always really an opposition. In some cases they are even more or less synonyms, namely where it describes the general circumstances of human existence. He lives, but is busy dying. When man no longer lives, he also does not die. Then he has already died. When he stops living, he also stops dying. Man is subject to bondage to death all his life, as Hebrews 2 says. Through the resurrection of Christ we are delivered from that, and if one is not delivered from that, then one not only dies, but after that there is also the judgment.
Opposite that stands Christ, who is not busy dying, for He is not subject to death and death no longer reigns over Him, but He is busy living. He offered Himself and He did so according to the power of an endless life. That is the opposite of dying. That leads not to judgment, but to salvation. If that offering meant that He died, then it would not be incorrect to say that He died for many, or to take away the sins of many. In my opinion it is illogical, because Scripture normally does not say that He died for many, but for all. “Many” can very well mean “all,” but then you must ask yourself why one term is not used and the other is. “Many” is used because it is not about His death, but about His life. For although He died for all, He lives only for those who believe in Him. That is one of the basic

truths of the Gospel. One died for all, and the preaching of the Gospel is the preaching of life to those who are dead.
People regard the Gospel as a message whereby one receives forgiveness of sins, and the problem is that this appeals to few people. That is of course because they have no sin problem. So we find out that people must have a sin problem, for if they do not have it first, they do not listen to the Gospel either. But a man should not have a sin problem. Moreover, what sense does it make to first talk someone into having a sin problem and then tell him that it has been solved? It is better to say that the problem did indeed exist. Not on the side of man, but on the side of God. He had a problem with it and He solved that problem. There is therefore nothing wrong when we have no sin problem. There is something wrong when we do not believe. If we do not believe, we have a share in the life of the old man and then we die and there comes a judgment over our life and over our works, insofar as those works proceeded from unbelief. That is the biblical thought.
The preaching of the Gospel remains that there is life through faith in the risen Christ. Through faith in Him whom God raised from the dead. That stands in countless places in the Bible, and the best-known place is 1 Corinthians 15, from which I have just quoted. In the first verses it says that it concerns the Gospel, and Paul then says what that Gospel contains, namely that the Lord Jesus died according to the Scriptures and that He rose the third day. And He was seen by this and that and by that one, and last of all also by Paul. The rest of the chapter then concerns resurrection. If you ask someone what 1 Corinthians 15 is about, he says that it is the resurrection chapter, but you can just as well say about 1 Corinthians 15 that the Gospel is preached there. It concerns nothing else than that there is life from death. That life was brought about by the Lord Jesus Christ, who for that purpose first entered death, but overcame that death. Therefore it is the preaching of life. The whole thought is that Christ, after He has brought about the purging of our sins, even the purging of all sins, is seated at the right hand of God and that He is there appointed High Priest of the New Covenant and that in that position He has offered Himself, not to take away the sins of all, but to take away the sins of many. Of whom then? Of those who draw nigh with boldness, or rather of those who believe in Him. Whereupon the inevitable counter-question is: “But weren’t all the sins already taken away? Why then must He again cleanse the sins of those who believe in Him?” Our sins have indeed been taken away and on that ground we have received eternal life, but the point is that we still have a problem. For God the old man, or who we are, has indeed died, but that old man still lives for us. We still dwell and live in a sinful body and not only come into contact with sins, but also commit them. Those sins do not take away our eternal life, but stand in the way of our practical service. Under the Old Covenant one could be part of the delivered people Israel, yet be unfit to serve the Lord. One could even be a priest, while at the same time being unfit to exercise that priestly function, for example because one had a defect. One was a priest and ate, just like all other priests, from the altar and enjoyed all the privileges of the priests, but one might not serve. One was a priest, but could not serve

in practice. We have been made ministers of the New Covenant, for under that New Covenant we should serve the Lord. In practice that is actually impossible, for we are stuck with that sin problem. What it then concerns is that the Lord Jesus Christ in His function as Head and Man, in His function as High Priest, does not take away those sins as such, but does nullify them. Thus those sins can no longer hinder us from serving the living God. In that function as High Priest and as the One Offered He therefore does not take away the sins of all, for He did that once, namely before He became High Priest. Now He takes away the sins of many, namely those of the believers. He stands in the service of God and in that function takes away our sins, so that we may indeed serve the living God.

- The Free Gift of God and Our Salvation

Now I automatically come to the concept of “salvation.” In Hebrews 9:28 it says that we look for Him and that we receive salvation at His coming again. But weren’t we already saved? Here it says that that only comes when He shall appear the second time to us. The concept of salvation is here used in particular for what we usually call “reward,” namely our future inheritance. Or it is used for the crowns we shall receive in the future. The concept of “salvation” is used for everything we receive from the free gift of God. Namely everything we have received from the grace of God and everything we now receive, but also what we shall still receive in the future. The context must show where it applies. We were already saved and here it therefore concerns receiving reward. In the whole existence of the natural man he fights against death all his life, yet is busy dying and he loses the battle. It is a fight in which it is predetermined that he loses it. He is subject to that bondage all his life and it leads to nothing. In Romans 5 we have seen that it is not only about Adam and Christ, but that through Adam it concerns the whole Adamic humanity and through Christ all who are in Christ. What do we now do all our life, since we have been born again and are in Christ? Do we then fight against death and against sins? No, we serve God under the New Covenant. For we are no longer in bondage, but are free to serve the Lord. Why was Israel delivered from Egypt? They were to go out of bondage and celebrate a feast to the LORD. The rest of their life would be a feast for the Lord. And they were indeed made servants to JEHOVAH. Unfortunately under the law, but that aside for a moment. Naturally the same example applies to the New Covenant. We are delivered from the bondage of the law and moreover from the bondage of death, as Hebrews 2 mentions. What we do afterwards is naturally serve the Lord. To what does that lead? That leads to reward, or salvation.

- We have become priests with Christ.

And if you have a defect and therefore cannot perform that priestly service, then Scripture says that is no excuse, because we are perfect in our High Priest. For He takes away our defects. We have presented our bodies as a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice to God, and the result of a life so devoted to God is salvation. Or as it stands in the Epistle to the Philippians: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” That is

of course not said to an unbeliever, but to someone who is already saved long ago. It concerns the practical service. What is called offering in Hebrews is called self-denial in the Epistle to the Philippians. We should, in spite of ourselves, serve the Lord. Therefore it also says that we should work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Being sincere in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, holding forth the word of life. That is serving the Lord. The natural man fights against death all his life and serves only death, but the new man serves God all his life and thereby works out his salvation, which he naturally receives by grace, and that applies in particular to those who look for Him. The believer offers his life and thereby also his body. One naturally does not offer the old man, but the new man, including the vessel in which he dwells.

- A Sacrifice

Hebrews 10:1
1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.
The law is a shadow of good things to come and not the thing itself. The law can never with the same sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make perfect those who draw nigh. “Draw nigh” is a variant from the Greek of the Hebrew “korban.” That is offering, or drawing nigh to God, or approaching God. Under the Old Covenant one drew nigh to God through the offerings. We who live under the New Covenant draw nigh to God through one offering. The law could not make perfect those who drew nigh. If those offerings did what they were supposed to do, those offerings would no longer be brought afterwards, for the simple reason that the one who performed the service would no longer have a conscience of sins, having been purged. Those offerings were indeed repeated every year, at least those of the Day of Atonement, but in reality they could not sanctify or cleanse man, and therefore it worked exactly the other way round.

- The law gives a remembrance of sins.

Hebrews 10:2–3
2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.
3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.
Through the offering, in fact, sins were only remembered. The point was that those sins should no longer be remembered. It was precisely the intention that they should be sanctified and their consciences cleansed from sins. And then they would no longer think about the need to offer to take away sins, for they were taken away. The fact that the offerings under the Old Covenant were repeated every year proves that they did not work and that they worked in exactly the opposite way, because they precisely brought about a remembrance of sins. Do you have a conscience

of sins? Yes? Then are you not cleansed? That is what it is about. The trouble is that some want to talk us into all kinds of sins, while the biblical message precisely tells the exact opposite. What we should be persuaded of is that there are no more sins. That there is not a single sin that stands in the way of our relationship with God. There is nothing that can hinder us from coming to Him in faith, and there is nothing that stands in the way of placing our lives in His hand so that we should serve Him. That is the Gospel. In our relationship with God sin no longer plays any role. Remembrance of sins and the bringing of offerings under the Old Covenant go together. Not only did the repeating of those offerings lead to nothing, but remembrance of sins also serves no practical purpose. On the contrary, in practice it works exactly the opposite. For precisely the bringing of those offerings and holding to the institutions of the Old Covenant prevents the Jews from coming to faith in Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant. In general you can observe that where people regularly remember their sins because they think they must, they also do not know this High Priest of the New Covenant. There they do not know the biblical truth that we have been cleansed once, but that moreover in our days our feet are also washed and kept clean, and that nothing stands in the way of our connection with the living God. I fear that you have all heard preaching at some time that certain sins in your life stand in the way of your relationship with the Lord. But that is unbiblical. On the contrary, it is precisely that Lord in whom our relationship with the living God is secured, despite our sins. Therefore it is also such a joyful message. Therefore the life of the New Covenant is also incorruptible life, for no one can ever drive a wedge into it. We must not learn to sin no more, but that before God our sins are taken away and are taken away.
I do not interfere with anyone’s personal faith life. No one can prescribe that to another, for we are different people. Each person also experiences it differently. But as far as I know it is not biblical for a believer day in and day out to confess his sins and ask God for forgiveness for them. If we believe, then we believe that our sins are taken away and that our sins are taken away. Instead of asking for forgiveness, we can much better thank God for the forgiveness we have received and even receive daily. For we live from the forgiveness of sins, whereby we can serve the living God. That is biblical practice. In itself there is nothing against asking for forgiveness, but if that happens continually and habitually, it works exactly the opposite way. Then it is no longer the expression of faith, but—and I hardly dare to say it—it then becomes the expression of unbelief. That may not be the case with you, but it is with many. They do not want to come to acceptance of grace and forgiveness of sins, and moreover think that it is not allowed. In practice it is remembrance of sins, while under the New Covenant that should no longer happen and therefore it is an expression of unbelief.

Hebrews 8:12
12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

In no way. We live under that situation and under that Covenant. This applies at the entrance of the New Covenant, from the moment we enter the New Covenant. That this verse is a reference to the activity of the High Priest of the New Covenant seems to me a clear matter.

Hebrews 10:4
4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.
There would therefore have to be other, better blood offered to do that, in such a way that those who draw nigh would no longer have a conscience of sins. So if we say that we no longer have a conscience of sins, then that is completely in accordance with what Scripture teaches. Our consciences must be clean to be able to serve the living God. If you have a plan to confess your sins tonight, then you are busy collecting them all day and your conscience is not clean. That at the same time makes you unfit to serve the Lord. That therefore has no use at all. We do not draw nigh to the High Priest, who is seated on the throne of grace, to ask for mercy and grace and help, but to receive them. We receive them there (Hebrews 4).There are quite a few Scripture passages in which it says that God did not desire those sacrifices. That is not said just like that. God did indeed institute that sacrificial service, but thereby the sins of the people could not actually be reconciled. Those offerings were only a shadow of good things to come. The only offering that God did desire was the offering of Christ under the New Covenant. The offerings under the Old Covenant are in the most favourable case a foreshadowing of that. The meaning of those offerings is therefore that they point forward to the New Covenant in general and to Christ in particular.

Hebrews 10:5
5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me;
Who is “he”? That is Christ. On the one hand the difference is pointed out between the offerings of the Old Covenant and that of Christ under the New Covenant. At the same time, of course, the agreement is pointed out, namely that the one is a picture of the other. These verses are quoted from Psalm 40. There are still quite a few words of similar drift that are not quoted here at all. In Psalm 40 the Psalmist makes the comparison between the institutions of the Old Covenant and Himself, for He is the institution of the New Covenant.
Psalm 40:1
1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.
It is therefore a psalm of David. Peter says that David is a prophet and that he therefore did not speak these things about himself, but about his Son, for he knew that God would bring forth Someone from his body and set Him on the throne. David knew that the words of the psalms would actually be the words of his Son, namely Christ (Acts 2).Psalm 40:2–3
2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.
This concerns His resurrection from the dead. The LORD heard His cry. That was not when the Lord Jesus hung on the cross, for then He said: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, far from my deliverance?” (Psalm 22). This He spoke three days later, when that deliverance had nevertheless come. The horrible pit and the miry clay are a picture of death. From there the Lord Jesus was delivered. He set His feet upon a rock. That is the rock of Isaiah 28. That is Himself, the sure Foundation.
Psalm 40:4–6
4 Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
5 Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.
6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.
On the one hand this verse points to the offerings and on the other hand to the remarkable phenomenon that the slave in the sabbatical year should be set free. If the slave does not want to be free and therefore wants to stay with his master, then his ear is pierced with an awl and fastened to the door. The seventh year is the sabbatical year, the year of rest. When we enter the New Covenant, we enter into rest and are delivered from bondage. Then it is the intention that we serve the Lord and therefore be fastened to the door. The piercing is a picture of faith. The awl literally goes through the earlobe, but figuratively it goes inward. The ear is opened so that one should be obedient and therefore believing and live from it. Thus here it speaks of the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. It happened to such a slave, but it portrays what would happen to the Lord Jesus. And when it says that He had no pleasure in sacrifice and offering, then that stands opposite the offering that the Lord Jesus brought
Psalm 40:7–8
7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,
8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.
There may be much written about sacrifice and offering and burnt offering and sin offering and the piercing of ears, but that does not take away that in the volume of the book it is in reality written of Christ.
Psalm 40:9–11
9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.
10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

Which congregation?
The words of verses 7 and 8 are quoted in Hebrews 10. Here there is mention of the resurrection of Christ and then of the Christ who comes to do God’s will. The first thing mentioned in the doing of God’s will is that

righteousness is preached to the congregation. Hebrews also opens with the resurrection of Christ. Then that He came to do God's will and submitted to that will of God. He offered Himself. The result is the Church. In Hebrews 10 we find the same. In verse 5 it says: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." The expression "cometh into the world" you do not read in Psalm 40. Because further on it is quoted from this Psalm, that expression should therefore be found somewhere in Psalm 40:1–6. In those first verses it concerns the resurrection of Christ. Who therefore comes into the world according to Hebrews 10:5? The risen Christ. Strictly speaking, the coming of the Messiah is at His resurrection from the dead. Not at His birth in Bethlehem. His birth in Bethlehem was the coming of the One who would be the Messiah. But the coming of the Messiah as such and therefore the dawning of the New Covenant, for those concepts are connected in the Old Testament, is at His resurrection from the dead.

Hebrews 1:3–4
3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.He has purged our sins and since then is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high and is so much better than the angels as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. And then follow the Scripture references:

Hebrews 1:5
5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
The first reference speaks of His resurrection and exaltation to the throne at the right hand of God. "And again" means: subsequently. The second Scripture reference is quoted from what we usually call the Davidic covenant. In it God announces that the Son of David would receive an incorruptible Kingdom, and of that Son of David God then says: "He shall be my Son." Not only the Son of David, but also the Son of God.

Hebrews 1:6
6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.
"Again" stands here somewhat in the middle of the sentence, but it has the same meaning. Thus follows the third Scripture reference. "Again" therefore does not refer to the bringing in of the Firstbegotten into the world, but just like in verse 5 it refers to: yet another quotation. If you then read the sentence again, it says: "And when he bringeth in the Firstbegotten into the world…." Who comes into the world? The Firstbegotten, the Christ. Thus we encounter a similar expression in

chapter 10: “Wherefore when he cometh into the world….” that is the Firstbegotten in His resurrection. And He says: “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.” And once more: “Burnt offering and offering for sin hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!” In His resurrection He came to do God’s will. What then did He come to do? He came to offer Himself. Thus we also know Him, as the Risen from the dead, who had to offer. Here it stands too, but then in different words.

Hebrews 10:8–9
8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;
9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.
Here it is therefore repeated once more. Then comes the explanation of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, namely that those are the offerings that are offered according to the law. And then He said: “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!” And that will has everything to do with putting into effect, but naturally also maintaining, the New Covenant. That is also stated, for: “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” The first is the law from verse 8 and the second is obviously the New Covenant. The doing of that will of God is therefore not part of the law, such as for example His suffering and dying, for that happened under the law, but it concerned precisely what would happen afterwards. He put an end to the Old Covenant through His suffering and dying, in order then to be able to set up the second, and that is of course what it is about.

Hebrews 10:5
5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me;
You will no doubt have noticed that this verse says: “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.” As far as I know, the word “body” is not mentioned in Psalm 40. Instead, something quite different is referred to: “Mine ears hast thou opened.” Within the framework of Psalm 40 this statement is perfectly explainable and can then also be very simply applied to the Epistle to the Hebrews. For it speaks of deliverance from bondage and then the transition to voluntary service, on the ground of faith, on the ground of the pierced ear. That Christ is the Believer and learned obedience from the things He suffered, and that through that obedience many are now made righteous, seems to me a clear matter, but that has nothing to do with the concept of “body.” From the form of the sentence it is evident that the statement “a body hast thou prepared me” is in some way derived from Psalm 40. It is not a commentary, but is supposed to be taken from this Psalm. But where then do we find a statement of that kind? A statement that roughly corresponds to it and can easily be brought into agreement with it is the one about the great congregation. We have surely learned by now that the congregation is the Body of Christ. Not before He died, but certainly since His

resurrection. Moreover, I must add that from Hebrews 10 and even from the rest of the epistle it is clear that that body is the designation of the Church. It is in accordance with Psalm 40, for there it speaks of “the great congregation.” When in Psalm 40 the doing of God’s will is spoken of, He first says: “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation…” and so on. From the Old Testament you cannot at all explain what the great congregation is, but from the New Testament of course you can. That can be nothing other than the Church of which we are part by grace. That is the Body of Christ.
The offerings in the Old Testament therefore should not have been brought, but the offering of Christ. That offering must be the Church. If therefore Christ offered Himself up, then by that He also offered up the Church. And if it is true that we are blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, and that serving God is a spiritual blessing, then we have a share in that blessing, because we are in Christ. And then we have also been offered up once with Him and in Him. That is also the theme that is subsequently developed in the following chapters. What we then call the practical application of our faith and our service to God. The traditional explanation of verse 5 is that it does not concern the resurrection of Christ, but His birth. He received a human body at His birth, so that He could offer it on the cross of Golgotha. I shall be the last to deny the thought as such. It may well be so, but that is not what it says here. It may be that the Lord Jesus received a body at His incarnation, and that is also what Scripture teaches, but it is not the theme of Psalm 40 and also not of Hebrews 10. It concerns the fact that He would offer Himself up and that by that He also offered up His body.

Hebrews 10:10
10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.It is according to the will of God that in our days a Church is being gathered out of Jews and Gentiles: a people for His Name, namely the Body of Christ. That work Christ is now doing. The body in verse 10 is the same body as in verse 5. In verse 5 it is simply not further explained, but in verse 10 it is made clear that we are sanctified, because we are members of that Body. And in the fact that He offered His Body, we are sanctified. To sanctify means to separate from the world and connect with the living God. That is precisely what has happened to us. That offering happened once. It is also one thing, one whole, and it has been completely accomplished, and we therefore have a share in that sanctification.

Hebrews 10:11
11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:
That is the same as what stood at the beginning of the chapter.

Hebrews 10:12–13
12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat

down on the right hand of God;
13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.
That is at the coming again of Christ. And where is the Church now? Seated at the right hand of God, for ever. Reigning on the throne. By grace we shall reign unto eternal life (Colossians 3). Your life is hid with Christ in God. We have a share in that heavenly calling and position of Christ. That is the point of that repetition here. Verse 11 is not merely a repetition of verses 1 and 2, but it precisely concerns the thought that this Christ offered one sacrifice for sins and that the Church is involved in it. It is also true that He did it for the Church, but we find that more in the first part of chapter 9. Here it concerns that we also have a share in that offering. For we have been offered up with Him. We too therefore wait for that salvation that shall be revealed, and we too wait for the moment when His enemies shall be made His footstool, and that is obviously at the coming again of Christ. There is agreement between Psalm 2 and Revelation 12. In Psalm 2 it is said: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Thou shalt rule the nations with a rod of iron.” All that is said about Christ. But part of the story is indeed quoted in Revelation 12 in connection with the Church. That means that those statements in Psalm 2 are just as applicable to the Church. For we are blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Hebrews 10:14
14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.
This connects with chapter 2. “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.” And the captain of our salvation had to be made perfect through suffering. But it concerns the unity of that. Here too it concerns the unity of this offering. The unity of Christ, who offered Himself up, and the Church, which was offered up. We individually follow that example of the Lord Jesus afterwards and therefore also present our bodies as a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice (Romans 12:1–2). We can hardly do otherwise, for actually it has already happened.

Hebrews 10:15–17
15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,
16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;
17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.
I will pierce their ears. They will believe and keep My Word in their heart. And what did the Lord say in Psalm 40? “Thy law is within my heart.” And what is said here about the New Covenant, which after all began at the resurrection of the Lord? “I will put my laws into their hearts.” It does not concern the Old Testament laws. Those were imposed. “Putting laws into their hearts” means that those who receive those laws believe. That they receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their

souls. That is what James said. These verses are the climax of the argument.

Hebrews 10:18
18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.
Where sins are forgiven, where they are let go, for to forgive is to let rest, there is no more offering for sin. One offering is enough. End of the story. Sins are no longer remembered. Thus far the doctrinal part of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This is the high point of the argument. But what am I now to do with it?

Hebrews 10:19
19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
That is the blood that the High Priest offered on the ark of the covenant in the Holiest of all, but now applied to the New Covenant. We have boldness to enter into the New Covenant and we have boldness to enter into heaven itself. By the blood of Jesus. It could also have said there: “by His offering” or “by the life of Jesus.” Not by the fact that He lives, but because He practically lives. Because He is busy living. It has to do with what He does and with who He is for us.

Hebrews 10:20
20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
“New” means that that way had just been established, for that is what the High Priest did on the Day of Atonement. He sprinkled the blood on the way to the mercy seat. That is that new way. And it was a living way, for blood is life. The Lord Jesus once said of that: “I go to my Father’s house and where I go you know.” I think another Epistle to the Hebrews was needed to explain what that meant. The Lord said: “I am the way, and no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” That is all a reference to the high-priestly position of Christ under the New Covenant. That already stood in John 14, three chapters before the so-called High Priestly Prayer. In that prayer He said: “I will that they all may be one, and that we may be one.” And if we are one, we also enter the sanctuary with boldness to draw nigh to God there and serve Him. We take our heavenly position and consider ourselves citizens of heaven and walk worthy of the heavenly calling wherewith we are called. He has consecrated that way for us through the veil. Not by means of the veil, but obviously through the veil. That means, through the separation from the Old Covenant to the New. That is through death.

Hebrews 10:21
21 And having an high priest over the house of God;
Whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end (Hebrews 3:6). We therefore have a High Priest.

- The Assembling Together

Hebrews 10:22
22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
It does not say that we should enter the house of God, that we should be added to those who are saved. Let us come to faith in the Lord Jesus so that we may be added to this house. No, but because we already have a share in the house of God through faith and because we know that we as the house of God have a great High Priest, we should now draw nigh to God and there offer ourselves up, after the example of our High Priest. This drawing nigh to the throne of grace is emphatically an offering of ourselves to God, following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Despite the fact that you and I know that there is much lacking in us. But please do not use the word sin, for that speaks of our relationship with God, and then it is said that we have been cleansed from that and that we should no longer have any conscience of it. If our High Priest has gone before us in this, then there is nothing else for it, and I can recommend nothing else to you than to follow Him and to enter there with boldness. Not to be saved, but to live saved. Not to receive life, but to live life. Not to come into the New Covenant, but to serve under the New Covenant. Let us therefore draw near with a true heart. That is a heart devoted to the truth. A heart in which the truth dwells. “Full assurance” is the explanation of the word “faith.” For faith is full assurance. That stands in Hebrews 11:1.

Hebrews 11:1
1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
Faith is not presumption, but full assurance. You choose for that. Our hearts have been sprinkled from an evil conscience. They have been cleansed from dead works. The body has been washed with pure water. Some apply that literally and apply it to water baptism, but I am inclined to take it figuratively and to say that the Old Testament outward ritual washings are a picture of the cleansing of the inner man, of the heart therefore.

Hebrews 10:23
23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)Hope speaks of our future expectation, and that is also evident from what follows. He has promised it and is faithful. If we, believers, in this way follow our High Priest into the sanctuary and offer ourselves there to place ourselves in the service of God, then promises have been made to us. Salvation has been promised to us, namely reward. That stands literally in verse 35.

Hebrews 10:35
35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

- The confidence to enter the sanctuary.

Salvation as such, eternal life, is not reward, but grace. Here it concerns reward for the service we perform under the New Covenant. Drawing nigh with boldness to the throne of grace therefore implies that we with boldness give our sinful bodies and lives, and whatever we have, to Him so that He may use it. That you need some courage for that is clear, but we shall have that boldness as we believe and as we have the truth in our heart. In full assurance of faith we have absolute boldness to do that. And if we do not have that boldness to enter and therefore neglect our assembling together, then there is no recompense of reward, but judgment. That is not new. That already stood in
1 Corinthians 3 and in Romans 2.
1 Corinthians 3:9–15
9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.
10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.
11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;
13 Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.
14 If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.
15 If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.10.

- Why can the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross not be called an offering?

If we were to discuss that, I would not even really have difficulty accepting that the Lord Jesus in His walk on earth placed His life at the disposal of His heavenly Father. That cannot be missed, and one might freely call that an offering as far as I am concerned. The only objection I have to it is that I have not encountered the term in that connection in the Bible. And I always object to the use of otherwise biblical terms in an unbiblical application. Misunderstandings usually arise from that. We then use biblical terms and assume that everyone agrees on their meaning, but it turns out that everyone gives his own explanation to them, and we therefore should not do that.
I therefore cannot answer the above question. It may perhaps very well be called so, but I observe that it does not happen that way in the Bible. If there is any speaking of an offering that the Lord Jesus brought, then that is at any rate discussed at length in the Epistle to the Hebrews. We have had those chapters before our eyes, and I would not know where else it is spoken of, except perhaps here and there a verse in which the term is

used. And certainly also some verses in which the same thought, but then in different words, is brought forward. Once more, if you think that the Lord brought an offering in His earthly life, that He placed it in the hand of His Father, that He served God, and that that was so perfect that it indeed reached into death, then I can very well agree with that. Nevertheless, this thought usually leads to misunderstandings.
I have not thereby exactly answered the question. If it is purely about His suffering and dying on the cross of Golgotha, then that is in the first place far too narrow to be called an offering. For it is not so much about His death. Death is never an offering. I think that all discussion and all questions have arisen from that. Life is an offering. The life that is devoted to something and in particular to the Deity. Also on a somewhat lower level that term can be used in that way. Death as such is not an offering. In English we use the word sacrifice. As far as I can see, we do not find the offering of the Lord Jesus described in the Bible in the presenting of His earthly walk on earth, but in the making available His resurrected body. To serve God in His resurrection and therefore in His present position. That line of thought is not just brought forward as a fact. Immediately connected with it, it is said that the Church has a share in that offering in two ways. In the first place He offered Himself up and placed Himself in the service of His heavenly Father, namely for our benefit. In the second place He offered Himself up with us. That is a different approach. The first thought is that He cleanses us and sanctifies us and makes us blameless and builds the Church. The other thought is that we have been offered up with Him, because we are after all members of the Body of Christ.
At the high point of the argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is expressly stated that He not only offered Himself, but also His Body, and that we are sanctified in it. As He placed Himself in the service of His heavenly Father, so we too are placed in the service of God. We have become priests and made fit to be ministers of the New Covenant. Therefore not only for us, but also with us. When the Lord Jesus in His resurrection presented Himself in the service of God, we became partakers of that offering, because we are members of His Body. Insofar as it is a blessing that the Lord offered Himself up and serves God, we indeed have a share in that blessing, for we are blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, and this priesthood and this offering are not excluded from that. So the answer to the question whether the cross of the Lord Jesus cannot be called an offering would be, without criticising the question, that strictly speaking it is not an offering. One cannot speak of an offering if what is offered does not come on the altar. If it does come on the altar and it is not consumed there, and therefore not taken to Himself by God by means of fire, then it is still not an offering.

- The Meaning of the Suffering and Death of the Lord Jesus

What meaning then does the suffering and death of the Lord have if this was not an offering? His suffering and death have as their practical effect that thereby a judgment has come upon the old creation and upon the old man. One died for all (it does not say that One offered Himself for all,

though it does say that One offered Himself for many) and therefore all have died. If you were to read into that that One offered Himself for all, then you would also have to read that thereby all have offered themselves. But you do not believe that yourself either! The meaning of His suffering and death is that He has taken away the sins of the world, that a judgment has been brought upon the old creation, that the demand of God's righteousness and God's law has been satisfied, and that thereby moreover man has been delivered from the law. For the law reigns over a man as long as he lives. If One has died for all, then all have died and all are no longer under the law. Through the death of the Lord Jesus man is therefore delivered from sin, from the law, and from himself. That does not help him a great deal, for he is then still dead. We live and are saved because He has been raised for us. Through faith in the One who was raised from the dead we have a share in Him who first died but now lives. Our salvation is secured in His resurrection.

It is difficult to discuss Isaiah 53, for if I really have to go into it, I must first explain how the title "Servant of the LORD" applies not only to the Lord Jesus but just as much to Israel. They are therefore words with a double application. Nevertheless, they are probably best known to us as speaking of the Lord Jesus, and of Him it is said in

Isaiah 53:7

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

It will be clear that these words directly relate to the suffering and ultimately the death of the Lord Jesus. It concerns His appearing before Pilate, Herod, and the Sanhedrin, in which He indeed generally kept silence and did not defend Himself, allowing this oppression to come upon Him. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Here too it does not say that He was offered as a lamb. Now I know full well that the word "slaughter" is generally rather synonymous with the concept of "offering," but I shall return to that. For it is not by definition the same, although the concepts do indeed overlap. What is certainly not set forth here is that the Lord is a lamb that was slaughtered. What is said here is that the Lord did not protest, just as a lamb that is slaughtered does not protest and just as a sheep does not protest when it is shorn. With this kind of matter you must of course first grasp the drift of the verse itself. What it concerns is that He did not protest. Slaughtering and shearing have the same meaning. The animal is deprived of its strength. In the first case it is completely deprived of life force, and in the second case "hair" is after all a picture of strength, and with the shearing the strength is therefore taken away. I have been told that by one Samson. I shall not go further into that, for then I would completely lose myself in typology. The apostle Peter later says in his epistle that the Lord committed everything to the One who judges righteously.

Isaiah 53:8

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

He indeed died. And these things came upon Him because of the transgressions of this people.
Isaiah 53:9
9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.
He had done no violence, and no deceit was found in His mouth. When it says that He had done no violence, you immediately expect that it will be followed by the fact that no deceit was found in His mouth. For doing violence is after all done in the first place with the mouth. That has to do with the words one speaks, or better still: it has to do with what is in the heart. What is in the heart is expressed through the mouth. If a man does violence, he does so because there is violence in his heart. The thought here is that He not only did no violence with hands and feet, but not even with the mouth. In fact these words simply mean that no unbelief was found in Him. He was the perfect Believer. If you then ask whether it does not mean that He committed no sinful deeds, then I must say that it also means that, but I mentioned something far higher and more comprehensive. He not only committed no sinful deeds, but it did not even arise in His heart. And that is something even more. And if there were no sins in His heart, that automatically implies that He also committed no sins. The statements about the Lord Jesus with regard to sins are not that He did not commit a single sin, as though He might perhaps have wanted to but was fortunately able to restrain Himself, but that it did not even come into His heart. It is therefore not merely a statement about His sinlessness, but also about His faith.
Isaiah 53:10
10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
If you now read only Isaiah 53, you read that there was no violence in Him and no deceit, yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him, and so on. Why then? If He indeed knew no sin and had done no violence and no deceit was found in His mouth, why then did it please the LORD to bruise Him? And why did the LORD make Him sick? Of Himself and in Himself He had no sin and was also no sinner, but He came in the likeness of sinful flesh and in sin His mother conceived Him. He became partaker of flesh and blood, because sinners are partakers of flesh and blood, but that does not yet mean that He Himself was also sinful. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh to bear the sins of mankind. The judgment that came upon Him was not judgment on personal account, but because He came to bear that judgment. Not because He by nature Himself bore the guilt, but because He had taken our guilt upon Himself. That did not happen a day before His crucifixion, but at His incarnation. He came in a body such as every sinner has.
Verse 9 establishes that He had no sin in Himself, and verse 10 says that He was nevertheless bruised. Oppressed is the thought, and that He was made sick. That was obviously because He bore the sins of the world.

2 Corinthians 5:21
21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
The Lord Jesus was made sin. He was regarded as the personification of sin. Therefore He is not called a sinner, but sin. The sin of the world was laid upon Him. It was not His own guilt, but He, who of Himself had no sin, was able and moreover had the right to bear the sins of the world. He was made sin for us and therefore He suffered and died, to be afterwards justified and raised from the dead without sin. When He rose from the dead, He obviously no longer bore that sin and guilt. He was not only raised righteous Himself, but also for our justification.
Romans 4:25
25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.
First there was the sinful man, then came the Lord who was made sin. He suffered and died and rose from the dead, so that man might then follow Him in that. These are words that give an explanation of the rather cryptic words of Isaiah 53.Isaiah 53:10b
10b … when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed …On what ground shall He see seed? When He shall have made His soul, His life, His being, His walk, or Himself, a guilt offering. If we wish, we might perhaps still find some arguments to connect the concept of “guilt offering” directly with His death. Simply because we want it that way. Then you could say that He died and that He would then see seed. “For if the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” And if it does fall into the ground, it does bear fruit. If you place this verse alongside it, then His death is the guilt offering and the seeing of seed is His resurrection. That is a nice parallel. But what happened to the most important part of the guilt offering? If it is an animal offering, there is slaughtering and various organs and parts are separated from one another and receive different destinies. Some parts are burnt outside the camp, and another part is eaten by the priests. Yet another part comes on the altar and is destined for the LORD. And if it is for the LORD, then that is the most important part.
But if an animal is slaughtered and one part is burnt outside the camp and another part is eaten by the priests, but the destined part does not come on the altar for the LORD, is it still an offering? If the altar plays no role in it, it is incomplete. Then it is an ordinary slaughtering and becomes food and so on. If we have no need to connect the word “guilt offering” immediately with death, then we have no problem at all, for then it stands for His resurrection. He rose from the dead as the Firstfruits. As the Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep and afterwards those who are Christ’s. Moreover, 1 Corinthians 15 says that if Christ has not been raised, there is no resurrection at all and vice versa. In short, He rises from the dead and afterwards many more. He would be the Firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8) or He would be the Captain of those many sons who would be brought to glory (Hebrews 2).If we place these statements alongside Isaiah 53:10, there is no problem at all. With the guilt offering we then imagine the rising up of the animal on the altar. Not

everything of the animal, happily, but the rising up at any rate makes the whole an offering, for that is the essence of the offering. So I read in the guilt offering that the Lord rose from the dead and ascended to God. The result of that was indeed that He would see seed. That means that many more would go the same way to receive new life and so on. He was raised for our justification. That I read in guilt offering. And we are that seed.
Isaiah 53:10c
10c … he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
That good and acceptable will of God is mentioned in Romans 12. There it is said that we should present our bodies as a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice to God.
Isaiah 53:11
11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.
Through the labour of His practical life He shall see it. Through His knowledge, through what was and is in His heart, through His faith therefore. Through the faith and out of the faith of Jesus Christ we have been saved. That is therefore also stated here in fact.
Isaiah 53:12
12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.
In His resurrection He fulfils the acceptable will of God. The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches that He has become the High Priest of the New Covenant and indeed makes reconciliation for the sins of the people, so that that people might be able to serve God. Here we read words of similar drift. He has become the cause of eternal salvation. It is very possible to place Isaiah 53:12 alongside Hebrews 9, for Jesus Christ is after all the One who as High Priest prays for His people. Who represents His people before God. Yet it stands here rather complicatedly, because at the same time it is a reference to the relationship of the Lord to Israel, in which the Lord Jesus literally prayed for the people. Even at the moment He died. The same statements must indeed also be able to be applied to the people Israel. The suffering of that people through the centuries has the purpose that it learns faith from what it has suffered, so that afterwards that same Israel becomes a cause of salvation to many nations. The thought is therefore that Israel in the future has the mediating function for the nations. You could say that Israel will then pray for the nations. Thus you can of course make a whole series: the Lord Jesus Christ prays for the Church, the Church prays for Israel, and Israel prays for the nations. That is at any rate the way in which the history of salvation will be realised.

- The Passover Lamb

If the Passover lamb is called an offering, we have a difficult problem, for the lamb did not end up on an altar. We then have an exception that was by no means the rule. Moreover, the Passover lamb was not a regular

offering. Yet it appears that it is indeed described as an offering. The question that was asked naturally concerns the thought that the Passover lamb is a type of the Lord Jesus. As is well known, the Passover lamb was killed. Whereupon the question is whether it was also offered.
Exodus 12:27
27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.
There is therefore indeed speaking of a Passover offering. Yet it concerns reading such a text in its context. What does the verse now really say? The question can never be whether we can use such a text to support or oppose a certain doctrine, but rather what this verse means in the context in which it stands. And why it is such a rarity that the Passover lamb is designated as an offering, while normally it cannot be regarded as an offering, because it indeed in no way came upon the altar. The description of the lamb stands in the first verses of Exodus 12. On the occasion of the exodus from Egypt Moses called all the elders. They had to kill and eat the Passover lamb, while they had to strike the blood of that lamb on the doorposts, so that they would then be delivered the next day.
Exodus 12:21–28
21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.
22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.
23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.
24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.
25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.
26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?
27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.
28 And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.
The peculiar thing is that here there is speaking of a Passover offering at the moment when deliverance and redemption are also spoken of. There is therefore great emphasis on what really happened. For the blood and therefore the life of the Passover lamb that was killed was struck on the door, and the flesh of the Passover lamb was eaten standing by the

Israelites, whereby they were delivered from Egypt the next day. The thought is that the life of the Passover lamb was found at the door, so that the life of that Passover lamb was given over to the door and men then went out through that door and were therefore subsequently delivered through that door. It had as it were become a living door. The lamb died and what rose from death was a door. That is perhaps rather plastically expressed, but that is how it presents it. And the Lord said: “I am the door.” It therefore does not so much concern the death of the Passover lamb. The death of the Passover lamb is relatively unimportant, and I hope you know the meaning of that. What is much more important is what subsequently happened with that Passover lamb, namely that the blood of that lamb was indeed struck on the doorposts, for otherwise that destroyer would not have passed over. Then the firstborn in the house would have been killed. It was indeed necessary that the Passover lamb be killed, but the purpose was that its blood be struck on the doorposts, so that the door had the life of the lamb. A lamb, standing as slain, therefore looks like a door, or like the Lion of the tribe of Judah. It is the picture of the risen Christ who has overcome death. It therefore indeed concerns resurrection. It is not thought of death, but of deliverance from death.
The same is expressed once more, because the flesh of the lamb was eaten by the people. They received the life of the lamb. They were thereby strengthened and could undertake the journey the next day. If now the death of the sacrificial animal were the most important thing and that were the picture of the suffering and dying of the Lord Jesus, why then were those sacrificial animals not beaten to death? For those who think there must be a most perfect parallel possible between the type and the fulfilment of the type. Why then did those animals have to be killed as painlessly as possible? Because it is not about suffering, but about the old life that is given up and the new life continues in resurrection or new birth. For those who are of the opinion that the killing and eating of the Passover lamb happened at the moment the Lord Jesus died, I must say that that was not so. There was a whole day in between. The Passover lamb is cited in the New Testament and there literally applied to the Lord Jesus.
1 Corinthians 5:7–8
7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:
8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.My first reaction to this verse, in connection with the subject we are discussing, is that it does not speak of an offering. It does not say that our Passover was offered, but sacrificed. The same word here translated “sacrificed” is sometimes also translated as “offered.” That is a linguistic issue. The Greek word for “slaughter” is also the normal Greek word for “slaughter.” That could hardly be otherwise, for in the parable of the prodigal son there is extended speaking of the slaughtering of oxen and the fattened calf. In Acts 10 and 11 Peter is told: “Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.” That has nothing to do with offering. But sometimes the word relates to certain religious or devotional matters, and then it is promptly

translated as “offered.” In 1 Corinthians 5:7 that should therefore also have happened. Yet the translators have rendered it as “sacrificed,” so I think they understood that the Passover lamb is normally not described as an offering at all and therefore forms no part of the sacrificial service as such. No altar is involved either. In 1 Corinthians 10 the same word is indeed translated as “offered.”

1 Corinthians 10:18–22

18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?

20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

What they sacrifice to idols they sacrifice to devils, to demons. That does not even concern God, but idols. And here the same word for “slaughter” is translated as “sacrifice.” That is rather far-fetched. The slaughtering, as it was customary in the Greek world in those days, was by definition also the dedicating of the flesh to the idols. Among the Greeks, therefore, slaughtering is also offering. The peculiar thing is precisely that the translators have rendered 1 Corinthians 5:7 as: “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.” The whole concept of “slaughter” originally has as its first meaning: to cause something to rise up. In the first place smoke and possibly dust. What rises is intangible and ungraspable, yet heavily in motion. Sometimes it is also translated as “boil.” That is also a wild stirring and rising. When water boils, it rages, but it evaporates and rises in the form of a cloud, water vapour, and often with great force. That word has also acquired the application of “slaughter,” or of killing, for when a man is killed, his spirit is set free from the body and returns to God who created him. Thus through killing the spirit is set free, so that only the packaging remains. The concept of “slaughter” therefore lies very close to the biblical concept of “offering,” namely the killing of the animal, with the intention that the killed animal should indeed come upon the altar, so that it might there, as literally as possible, rise up to God. That is the reason why this Greek word is so suitable to be translated both as “slaughter” and as “offering” in the broad sense. But that does not mean that this Greek word also actually has the meaning of “offering.” It can have it, but that is then determined by the context in which it is used.

If we say: “For the Lord died for us, so let us keep the feast,” then we still have much to explain! We no longer do that, because we are accustomed to the expression. Why are we glad about Someone who died? If we use such terms and people know nothing more, then they must surely get the impression that we are talking about our enemy who is dead. Understand me well, I do not blame anyone if he sings it that way. The whole point is of course that He died, but that we are glad because He also rose again from the dead. We are glad that He first died and then also rose again, for

that is how our redemption was accomplished. Not with the fact that He died as such. And we are not glad that the Passover lamb was killed for us, but we are above all glad that we then received a share in that Passover lamb. That we went out through that Door and were delivered from the leaven, and that we are therefore delivered from sin and from all those old things. Moreover, we are glad that we have received a share in the unleavened bread, namely in the new creation. For we are unleavened. The old has passed away. We have a share in the life and in the blood of this Lamb.
If the Lord Jesus was a penal Lamb, why then did the sacrificial animals under the Old Covenant have to be perfect? “Penal Lamb” is not a biblical term. In Peter He is called a lamb without blemish and without spot, and in Hebrews it is said that He offered Himself without spot to God. In that connection I have said that the Lord Jesus at His crucifixion was not without spot, but penal. The cross was a penalty; that is a fact. Under the Old Covenant nothing might be lacking in the sacrificial animals. The Lord Jesus lacked nothing in Himself. He was perfect. No deceit was found in Him and He had done no violence. That is what the perfection of those sacrificial animals indeed pictures. They had to be perfect by nature, without defect, because the Lord Jesus Himself was perfect by nature and without defect. That is also the most important reason for His early resurrection. He was raised on the basis of His faith. And even on the basis of His perfect faith. The outward perfection of the sacrificial animals is a picture of the inward perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ, with which I hope I have made no statement about His physical condition. Whether He was physically perfect. For how that should be and what it looks like, we have no idea anyway.
If the Lord Jesus was a sinner from His birth, why then was He conceived by the Holy Ghost? I did not say that. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. I have never called Him a sinner. Nevertheless He was made sin. If then He bore our sins, why then was He conceived by the Holy Ghost, and how then could He bear our sins? He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, but that is only half the story. He was not man because He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, but because the Lord Jesus was born of Mary. That therefore had to do not with the Father’s side, but with the mother’s side. In this connection one would have to call the Holy Ghost the Father. According to a certain completely biblical way of reasoning, His resurrection is based on the fact that He was indeed conceived by the Holy Ghost. He not only had human life in Himself, but in some way also divine life, and that is the reason He also could not be held by death.
He was a sinner because He bore our sins.
Insofar as He was a sinner, He was so because He bore our sins. He was not so because of His own sins.

- The Lord Jesus Was Without Sin

In the Bible it says that the Lord Jesus was without sin. What then does that refer to? In general it will appear that this refers to the fact that He was believing. Of course I do not deny that the Lord was without sin by nature and that He did not sin. That may all be so, but ultimately that is

not the most important thing. For if a man did not sin, he would nevertheless still die. The most important thing is that a man receives eternal life on the ground of faith. That also applies to the Man Jesus of Nazareth. He received eternal life on the ground of His faith. And He rose from the dead as Firstfruits on the ground of His perfect faith.
1 Peter 2:19–24
19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.
20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.
21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:
22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:
23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:
24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.
If you have sinned and you are punished for it, then you have no reason to complain. One should not resist it either, but simply bear it. You receive no praise for that, for that is self-evident. The description here of someone who does well and suffers for it is of course in the first place applicable to the Lord Jesus Himself. He suffered while doing good. He suffered because He did good. What then did He do so well? Believe, of course. All the rest flowed from that. He was persecuted because of His faith and therefore He suffered. And as the Lord Jesus suffered because of His faith, so we too should bear our suffering because of faith. It is not about suffering in general, for there is no reward for that. Nor for the suffering of the believer. Here it concerns suffering because of faith. That example the Lord Jesus has left us. That the Lord Jesus is an example for believers is generally known, but what the example consists of seems no one knows. Does that then mean that we must go and eat with everyone, or associate with harlots and tax collectors? Or take no notice of the established order, or preach provocatively in the synagogue? That is of course not it. The example is the example of faith and naturally the life out of faith and bearing the practical consequences of that.
You will no doubt also understand that Peter is not particularly referring to the suffering on the cross, but naturally to the suffering of the Lord Jesus in His whole earthly walk, of which the cross was of course the lowest point. In Romans 4:12 it is called: the steps of faith. There it concerns the faith of Abraham. The Lord Jesus did no sin, and no guile was found in His mouth. Guile is first committed in the mouth. In the mouth they commit guile, their throat is an open sepulchre, and the poison of asps is under their lips (Romans 3). There the sinful position of man is described and it is expressed in what goes out through the mouth. If no guile was found in His mouth, then truth was found in it, for that was in His heart. And He believed in that truth. In 1 Peter 2:23 it then says what that example consisted of. We should, living by faith, commit all these things to the One

who said: “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” Vengeance and repayment therefore do not belong in our personal vocabulary. God Himself will judge, and the Lord Jesus has also committed the judgment to His heavenly Father. That heavenly Father raised Him as Firstfruits from the dead. He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. We are therefore dead to sins, that we might live in the service of righteousness.
Who said that Peter preaches a different Gospel from Paul? Then just read Romans 5 and 6. There it says that we are dead to sins and then live for God, with the intention that we should present our bodies, our members, as instruments of righteousness. That is exactly the same as what the apostle Peter says here. We should not be slaves of sins and thereby live in sin, but in the service of righteousness. In a certain sense we are therefore slaves, in the sense of bondservants, of righteousness. For by His stripes we were healed. Now that we are healed, we have no excuse at all not to serve the Lord. Or according to Hebrews: Now that our hearts are cleansed from an evil conscience, we have no excuse at all not to serve the Lord.
1 Peter 2:25
25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.
The soul stands for the man himself and in particular for the practical walk of life of the man. That which of life is visible on the outside. He oversees that. And the Epistle to the Hebrews indeed also speaks about that.
We have yet some other Scripture passages in connection with the Lord Jesus being without sin.

Hebrews 4:15
15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.
He can therefore sympathise with our infirmities. And He was tempted in all points just as we are, yet without sin. What sin? Unbelief. That is precisely what has already been set forth in the preceding chapters.
How is it that only a part of those who were delivered from Egypt arrived in Canaan?

Hebrews 3:17–19
17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?
18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?
19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.
It was therefore because of sin. Those who sinned fell in the wilderness. The whole people arrived in Canaan, but some members of that people did not. In verse 18 it is called disobedience. Was it then because of sin or because of disobedience? There is only one conclusion: those terms have the same meaning. The sin of disobedience. Disobedience does not in the first place mean the unwillingness to do what is commanded, although

that is the thought of those who live under the law. Disobedience means that one is unwilling to listen to what is spoken. Whether one should do something and whether there is also a command with it is not even relevant, but in disobedience one is unwilling to listen to… In verse 19 the conclusion is therefore that sin and disobedience are nothing other than unbelief. Sin, in the singular, certainly in the New Testament, has the meaning of unbelief. Sin is either the designation of the sinful nature, but the context will surely show whether it is that, or the designation of a certain known sinful act, and the context will show which particular sinful act that is. But in very many cases it is the designation of a certain disposition, namely the unwillingness to listen and therefore of unbelief. Insofar as there is a sin through which a man is lost, it is that of unbelief, so that you now immediately have an answer to the question of what sin against the Holy Ghost is. That is the sin of unbelief. The rejecting of what God has spoken and therefore also the rejecting of what God offers and therefore the rejecting of eternal life. The rejecting of the Son, in whom that life is, and the rejecting of the Spirit, who is that life. On the ground of that choice one is lost. For one has chosen it oneself.
When in Hebrews 4:15 it says that the Lord, just as we, was tempted in all points, yet without sin, then it is also clear from the context and from the practical application that follows later in the epistle that He was tempted, that temptation should lead to unfaithfulness, to unbelief, to letting go of the Word of God. Even if only for a moment. With Him, however, those temptations did not lead to unbelief. He is therefore the perfect, sinless Believer. The perfect, obedient Servant of the LORD.

Hebrews 5:8
8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;
It is not about learning to overcome sins or learning not to sin any more, but about learning to believe and learning to trust. That must be learned, for as life progresses one comes into more complicated circumstances and more temptation. In all those circumstances one is expected to trust in the Lord. That is learning obedience. Not looking at the circumstances, but trusting in what God has spoken. As He suffered more, He might possibly have doubted more. That is precisely what the Corinthians bring against the apostle Paul. They claim that, since Paul came into so much misery, he could not possibly be an apostle of God. For if God was with him, surely all these things would not have happened to him. Paul says that it is just the opposite, namely that God is precisely with him through that, and that through that he learns to believe and learns what comfort is. And where he has been comforted more than any other apostle, he is also more able to comfort the Corinthians.

Hebrews 5:9
9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

It seems clear to me that He is here also actually our example. We follow Him. He was obedient, we are obedient; He was believing, we are believing. That leads to eternal salvation.
1 John 3:4–5
4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.
5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.
This kind of statement in John is very difficult to explain briefly, except when we have first gone through a period of getting used to the words of John. John has after all a rather peculiar way of considering and discussing things. He is not even speaking here about the Lord Jesus in His humanity on earth. He is here speaking about the present position of Christ, seated at the right hand of God, the Most High, in particular the High Priest of the New Covenant. Exactly as in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Only he never uses that term. Nevertheless he discusses exactly the same truth. As far as I see, the thought here is that the Lord has indeed been manifested to take away our sins. I am inclined, with the word “manifestation,” just like the apostle Peter, not only to think of His coming again, but of His resurrection, for strictly speaking that is the first coming of the Messiah. Since His resurrection He at any rate takes away our sins. Thereby the following expression is also explained, namely that no sin is in Him. It does not say that there was no sin in Him, but that there is no sin in Him. That of course means that the Lord is now sinless. That seems self-evident, but do not be mistaken, for we are in Him. Insofar as we are in Him, we are sinless before God, and insofar as we are not without sin, then that is not in Him. Then that is still our old man, but God does not reckon that. This verse therefore says the same thing twice. That is nothing special for John, for he manages to say the same thing ten times in succession, but then in different words. He also says for example that whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever is part of His body, or of His people, or His Church, that one does not sin. Of course that speaks of our relationship to God. Or: “Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him.” Then God is also not in him.
1 John 3:9
9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.
That which is born of God does not sin. Insofar as we are born of God, we do not sin. That cannot be otherwise. Paul says in Romans 7 that he still sins, but that it is not he himself who does it, but the sin that dwells in him. He distances himself from it. Then someone said: “I find that rather convenient.” Then I said: “Well, try doing it yourself.” For that is of course the intention. And then it turns out that it is not so easy. Nevertheless, the legal basis is indeed that simple. We are in Him, and in Him there is no sin.

- The Sins of the World and the Sins of Believers

The Lord took away the sins of the world on the cross. Why then must He now once more take away the sins of believers? As far as our old man is concerned, the sins through which we are lost have been taken away once for all. That applies not only to believers, but to the sins of the whole

world. For every human being. Afterwards we come through faith in the risen Christ to eternal life. We are born again. Thus we receive a share in the resurrection of Christ. But although we have a share in the resurrection of Christ and therefore in the eternal life that is in us, we are nevertheless still in our sinful body and therefore still sin. Thereby our salvation is still secure. In the meantime, after our new birth and before our redemption from our body, we live in sin and are contaminated with sin and are, according to biblical standard, still unfit to serve the living God. The great misunderstanding is that God’s dealings are only about the salvation of sinners. That is absolutely incorrect. Of course it concerns the salvation of sinners. But the history of salvation is not merely about one thing, namely redemption. The history of salvation is Christological, or better still, Christocentric and even Theocentric. For it is not about the redemption of the sinner, but about the honour of God. That honour of God takes shape through the creature serving God. For He is the Creator. But the sinful creation and therefore the sinful creature cannot serve God. That is simply a given. Therefore God ensures that that sinful creature is delivered from sin and the power of sin, in order then nevertheless to serve God and so give Him honour. First the sin problem was solved. But if that were the only problem, then theoretically the Lord could just as well have died on the Last Day, for then the whole old creation would also have been gone immediately. If the Lord then rose again, there would at the same time also be a new heaven and a new earth. That could just as well have happened in one day. If the story were structured that way, you would still be left with the problem that that old creation never and in no way served God, or was able to serve God. And then that old creation would also have been a failure. Then God would have made something that led to nothing, which He simply threw away, in order then to put something new in its place. I am really trying to say it as neatly as possible, but it does not sound neat, I know. It is also not to the honour of God to say it that way. So it did not happen that way. What actually happens is that the old creation, this old creature, your old body and mine, is made fit, made capable, to serve the living God as old creation, for that it remains. So that no one can ever say that that old creation served no purpose. God settled judicially with the sin of the old creation and brought a new creation into being through the resurrection of Christ. He has given us the life of that new creation, still in our old body, with the consequence that our old body is indeed expected to be alive, although nothing has changed in it when we came to faith. God placed new life in it, with the result that the old body has indeed been made capable of serving the living God. That is what the Epistle to the Hebrews is about. So why did the Lord, after He had once cleansed us, still have to take away sins again? Because He nullifies that sin in us and cleanses our consciences from it and covers the sins, so that we should present our bodies, however sinful they may be, as instruments of righteousness and as a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice to God.

The making of reconciliation for the sins of the people, which the High Priest now does for the people, does not have the salvation of that person as its purpose, for that has long been accomplished, but it has the

salvation of the soul, or rather the redemption of the soul, as its purpose. We have been made capable of having a share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

- We are made capable to be ministers of the New Covenant.

To walk in the practice of our life, also in deeds and works, to the honour of God.
In connection with this subject, I am always inclined to go straight on to Hebrews 10, the last verse, and then jump to Philippians, Peter, and James, to show that those apostles all speak about exactly the same thing. Namely, that we have now indeed become hearers of the Word and have a share in the new creation, and that the life of Christ is in us, and that we have been born again to a living hope, but that the intention of all this is the salvation of the soul.
We have been born again according to the spirit, and the intention is that as a consequence of that, our soul should also be saved. The soul stands for the practical walk of life and therefore the practical service to God. In Isaiah 53 it is not for nothing that the Lord has made His soul a guilt offering. Himself and in everything He does. That is really what it is about. But the problem is that we often do not see that, because for a host of reasons we are constantly brought back to our salvation as such. For if you believe in the Lord Jesus, then everything is fine. If you do not believe in Him, then you are lost and you go to hell, or however it may be called. That may be a biblical truth, but that is not the only thing. What it is about is that the old man has become unprofitable and has altogether turned aside. For what then has he become unprofitable and from what has he turned aside? To serve God, for that is what the creature should do. That is the thought. If all is well, we as creatures should reach out to serve God. Then it will appear that we cannot do that. The joyful message is not merely that there is redemption and eternal life in Christ, but that God makes us capable of serving Him. Obviously not under the law, but under grace. Not under the Old Covenant, for that was a ministry of death, but under the ministry of grace, of glory, of the Spirit, or the ministry of life, or however it may be called. If we could only get that into our heads and hearts, then we would have far less trouble with the thought of that offering of Christ.
What it is all about is that no good dwells in that old creation, but that good dwells in the new creation that has been brought into being. In it dwells the righteousness of God, and that is capable of serving God. And if we are new creatures, then let us offer that life to serve God. That is the essential drift of all the New Testament epistles. If we do not see that, then we lose the thread completely halfway through those epistles. So not only believe and then in heaven. That way you do come to eternal life quite simply. Cheaper it cannot be. You cannot even haggle. But then it is expected of us that, now that we have been made capable, we should indeed offer our living, sanctified bodies to God. For that is the reason we have been saved. God did not do that merely for your and my sake, but He did it to His honour. And if you have criticism of that, then I must point out to you that He is God. If anyone deserves honour, it is He. If He

creates something, then it should be to His honour. Where that creation is not to His honour, He is the One who brings change to it. Even still in that old creation. That has been accomplished through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has become our High Priest and our Example, in more than one respect.
Amen.